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THE
D E N I A L;
OR, THE
HAPPY RETREAT.
A N O V E L.

V O L. III.



THE
DENIAL;
OR, THE
HAPPY RETREAT.
A NOVEL.

By the Rev. JAMES THOMSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. III.

Hoc patrium est, potius consuefacere filium
Suâ sponte rectè facere, quàm alieno metu.
Hoc pater ac dominus interit: hoc qui nequit,
Fateatur se nescire imperare liberis.

TERENT. in ADULPH.

'Tis this then is the duty of a father:
To make a son embrace a life of virtue
Rather from choice than terror or constraint.
Here lies the mighty difference between
A father and a master. He who knows not
How to do this, let him confess he knows not
How to rule children.

COLMAN.

L O N D O N :

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M,DCC,XC.

THE

DE NINE

OF THE

HAPPY RETURN

A NOVEL

BY MR. JAMES T. ...

IN THREE VOLUMES



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T H E
D E N I A L.

L E T T E R XL.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR.
BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

WHILST I was preparing to go to rest, I was alarmed by a loud knocking at the front door. In a few minutes my hostess came, and informed me that Mr. Brooke wished to speak with me. I desired he might walk in. As soon as he entered, he said, "Mr. Wilton, you are,
Vol. III. B "doubt-

“doubtless, surprised at the lateness of
 “my visit; but let the merit of my in-
 “tention plead my apology;—here is a
 “letter for you.” I looked at the direc-
 tion—I knew the writing—I tenderly
 kissed it, yet trembled to read the con-
 tents.—“Accept, Mr. Brooke, of my
 “kindest thanks for the trouble I have
 “given you at this late hour.”—“I hope,
 “Mr. Wilton, you do not despise this
 “favour of the Lady.”—“Pardon me,
 “Mr. Brooke, a favour from her fair
 “hand is the most agreeable present which
 “I can receive.”—I broke it open, and
 read the following tender effusion, which
 has almost distracted me :

TO MR. WILTON.

DEAR SIR,

CONFUSED, and absolutely uncertain
 how to determine, since Sir Robert and
 Lady Bertram positively assert that the men-
 tion

tion of the challenge was nothing more than the effect of mirth ; yet I have my fears, strong boding fears, that it was too true. The mystery in which they have enveloped this offensive letter, and their evasive answers, confirm my suspicions. I know the man, and believe I am not mistaken in my conclusion. O Wilton, if there be any veracity in your vows, any truth in the assertions of your love, I solemnly conjure you not to deceive me, nor risk a life which I already value above the universe. Remember you live not for yourself—remember I love—Goodness ! what distraction confounds—what dizziness is this !—O Wilton ! Wilton ! forbear, and let the arguments of the good Mr. Brooke prevail with you to desist from your fatal purpose.

I am, &c.

OLIVIA BERTRAM.

Thunder-struck at the perusal of this letter, I arose involuntarily from my chair:—disordered and agitated, I walked across the floor, while Mr. Brooke commiserated, and strove to assuage, by lenient and gentle admonitions, the convulsive throbbings of my perturbed bosom. I clasped the letter to my breast, and at intervals exclaimed, “Olivia, dost thou love me! Yes, I trust to thy confession! I will live to repay thy generous affection!”

How long this agreeable reverie might continue, I am uncertain; but the voice of Mr. Brooke recalled my disordered thoughts to the purport of his nocturnal visit, by saying, “Mr. Wilton, I am no stranger to the unhappy difference that subsists between you and Mr. Fennell, nor of the fatal purpose by which it is to be terminated.”—I started at the discovery, and answered, “Pray, Sir, whose officiousness has misled you?”—“No equivocation, Mr. Wilton:—no person
“ by

“ by an ill-timed officiousness has in-
“ formed me of your intention. I came
“ hither in absolute doubt, at the parti-
“ cular request of the sweet young lady
“ whose fears for your safety have be-
“ trayed her affection; but your own
“ conduct hath convinced me of the truth
“ of her assertion. Why do you look so
“ wildly, Mr. Wilton? Olivia told me
“ you had received a challenge from Mr.
“ Fennell, and she has sufficient reason
“ to believe you are resolved to accept
“ of the invitation.”—“ Mr. Brooke, I
“ wish not to throw a disguise over any
“ of my proceedings, not even over the
“ acceptance of this challenge, which I
“ sincerely condemn and abhor, as subver-
“ sive of morality, and contradictory to
“ the laws of religion.”—“ Pray, Mr. Wil-
“ ton, how do you reconcile your conduct
“ with your principles?”—“ O, Mr. Brooke,
“ do not ask me for a reconciliation of
“ such jarring ingredients: I reprehend
“ my conduct; you will approve my prin-

“ ciples. But tell my dearest Olivia, tell
“ her the last words you heard me arti-
“ culate were, that her lovely image was
“ imprinted on my heart.”—“ Those, Sir,
“ are not, and shall not be your last words
“ to me. Pardon the freedom of one
“ who wishes to dissuade you from
“ the commission of a crime which,
“ even if successful, may embitter your
“ days even to the latest period of your
“ existence; and if unfortunate, are you
“ prepared to rush into the awful presence
“ of your Creator uncalled and unpre-
“ pared? There no excuse will avail, no
“ equivocation palliate—custom will con-
“ demn you, and religion be your greatest
“ foe. You saw and acknowledged what
“ was right; you daringly committed
“ what was wrong.”—“ O, Mr. Brooke,
“ do not judge me so severely! I assent
“ implicitly to all your assertions, as per-
“ fectly consonant to the inferences of my
“ own unbiassed conclusions; but what
“ can I do in this pressing exigency?”—

“ Retract,

“Retract, if you have accepted the chal-
“lenge, and refuse to meet Mr. Fennell.
“This is no disparagement to your cou-
“rage. The bravest men have ever def-
“pised the barbarous practice of duel-
“ling; yet have, when their King and
“Country called for their exertions, stea-
“dily and calmly looked death in the
“face, even in the mouth of the dreadful
“cannon. Think of such examples;
“they are not few. Think what you
“owe to your God, to your Country, to
“your Parents, to Yourself; and withal
“think what you owe to the Fair Writer
“of that letter!”—“Every thing, Mr.
“Brooke! and I am willing to lay my
“life at her feet, if such a sacrifice
“would add one moment to her happi-
“ness.”—“Remember, Mr. Wilton, she is
“at this present minute miserable and
“unhappy.”—“O, Sir, wring not my soul
“with so dreadful an assertion!”—“It
“is true, Sir; and let this consideration,
“if none other will, prevail upon you to

“relinquish an intention so destructive to
“her peace and pernicious to her happiness.”—“O, Mr. Brooke, you have
“touched a subject which quite unmans
“me, and melts my soul into tenderness.
“—I will reflect—I will reconsider, and
“must assent to the criminality of my
“purpose—I will retract.”—“Hold to that
“resolution, and be not ashamed of being
“a rigid advocate in the cause of virtue.”

It was late, and Mr. Brooke, by a variety of potent arguments drawn from religion and sound policy, attempted to confirm me in my last resolution. They were congenial to my own opinions, consentaneous to the purest precepts of virtue, and accordant to the wise decrees of political safety; I never therefore attempted to combat their justice or propriety. Mr. Brooke retired, wishing to see me in the morning.

I was calm and composed before his arrival; but his salutary admonitions had unhinged my resolution, disturbed my
thoughts,

thoughts, and thrown my mind into a very chaos of confusion. I wanted repose, and wished to sleep:—my wish was vain—no repose soothed the agonizing torment of my mind—no sleep closed my eye-lids, and softened my surrounding horrors. O, Mr. Brooke, your kindness hath undone me! yet I thank you; your intention was good!—Shall I comply with it? The world's dread laugh answers, No.—A kind forgiving father, a weeping distracted mother, mourning affectionate sisters, were ever present to my imagination. But the dearest object that wrung my heart with sorrow was the lovely Olivia. Heavens, what a night I spent! O, Mr. Brooke, I forgive and acknowledge your tender care and parental kindness; your visit was to engage me to what was right.—I approve your opinions; but must, yes, must, act contrary to them.—

The rays of the sun were shining through the crevices of the window-shutters, and penetrated brightly through my curtains.—

I heard the industrious family were stirring, and had left their peaceful beds—a heavy slumber overspread me, and I sunk into a sound sleep.

I arose calm and refreshed, and, looking upon my watch, was surprised to see it was past one o'clock. When breakfast was brought in, I was informed Mr. Brooke had been enquiring for me; but when he was told that I was not risen, he would not disturb me, and said he would call again. Worthy man, how shall I repay your kindness!—Whilst I was musing over a cup of chocolate, Sir Robert entered. He said, “Mr. Wilton, “my Lady is very urgent and clamorous “with me to dissuade you from this encounter. She knows not you have accepted the challenge, nor must she “know it. What hour and place have you “appointed?”—“Six o'clock this evening, Sir, and we meet at the west side “of your park.”—“Very well; at four I “will ride out to prevent suspicion, go
“another

"another way, and under some pretence
 "will dismiss the servant. I will meet
 "you there a little before six. I must
 "stay no longer, lest the ladies suspect
 "where I am."

Having finished my breakfast, and adjusted every thing for the fatal meeting, I walked out by the side of the Wansbeck, and sitting down upon its verdant bank, beneath the cooling shade of a poplar, I amused myself with the perusal of Lucretius. His arguments against the fears of death were not convincing, but appeared at this awful hour trivial and inconclusive. The Divinity that stirred within me shewed the futility of his reasoning. Though I did not approve, I felt myself somewhat relieved from that tenderness which Olivia's letter had infused. I had scarce one pang, but for that poisonous letter!—I looked at my watch—it was near five. I walked hastily to my lodging, and was informed that Mr. Brooke,

after waiting above an hour, had not been gone many minutes.

I put my pistols into my pocket, and, concealing my sword under my coat, walked towards the place of appointment. Upon my arrival, I saw no person. I walked backward and forward till a few minutes before six, when Sir Robert came. He alighted and walked with me. The hour passed, and Mr. Fennell never appeared; but as there might be some difference in regard to time, we agreed to wait half an hour longer. At twenty minutes past six by my watch, Mr. Fennell arrived, accompanied by Mr. Colton. They alighted, and, after the example of Sir Robert, tied their horses to some neighbouring trees.

Our salute was distant, cool, and reserved. Sir Robert and Mr. Colton settled the distance, and immediately placed it. During the adjustment of these preliminaries, I found myself more collected than I had been since the receipt of Olivia's

via's letter. We took our stands. Mr. Fennell received his pistols from Mr. Colton, as I did mine from Sir Robert. Mr. Fennell had the first fire.—Benfield, when I saw his pistol presented, I assure you I had occasion to summon all my fortitude.—He fired, but without effect. I returned the fire, and missed likewise.—Sir Robert interposed, and said, he thought the business might now be settled amicably. Mr. Fennell peremptorily refused, and presented his second pistol.—I felt the ball graze upon my left arm a little below the elbow. I discharged my second pistol in the air, and drawing my sword, desired him to advance. He came forward with much intrepidity, and attacked me with the greatest fury and impetuosity. I only acted upon the defensive for several minutes, but such was the violence of my antagonist, that it required my utmost address and exertion to parry the many skilful lounes he made at me. Abating of his vigour, I became the assailant,

failant, when, aiming a skilful thrust, my foot slipped, and before I could recover myself, I received the point of his sword below my right breast. I felt I was wounded, and was fearful of the consequence. Thus irritated, I became more furious, and, of course, less guarded; and had not my opponent exhausted his strength at the first onset, I certainly must have fallen beneath the vigour of his arm. After a few ineffectual thrusts, which he parried with dexterity, I wounded him in the right arm, my sword passing thro' above the elbow. Mr. Colton observed it, and immediately interposed, desiring that we would desist. "No, no, Mr. Colton," answered Mr. Fennell, "it is nothing but a mere scratch." He then attacked me with more fury than skill, and I found little difficulty in defending myself from his violence. I found his life was in my power, but wished not to deprive him of it. After retreating a little backward, I rested the point of my sword upon the grass,

grafs, and said, " Mr. Fennell, you must
" be conscious of my present superiority,
" which the wound in your arm hath
" given me ; I hope therefore we may
" terminate our difference without pro-
" ceeding to extremity."—" I scorn, Mr.
" Wilton, to acknowledge your superio-
" rity ; it is visible only to yourself." Sir
Robert wished for an accommodation, but
Mr. Fennell was inflexible. Again I as-
sumed my guard, and received the at-
tack of my opponent. He had lost his tem-
per, and consequently his skill. He made
a violent lunge, which I parried ; and
immediately passing my sword through his
left side, he fell.—Clapping both his hands
to the fatal wound, " Wilton," exclaimed
he, " the prize is your's !" —then, writhing
with agony, he added, " Fly, lest the laws of
" your country overtake you ; for, living or
" dying, you shall not escape my venge-
" ance."—" I grieve for your implaca-
" bility, Mr. Fennell. If in defending
" my honour and my life, I have deprived
" you

“you of your’s, I shall trust to the justice
“of my country for an acquittal.—Mr.
“Colton, have you any assistance?”—
“There is a surgeon waiting at a little
“distance with a carriage.”—Mr. Colton untied his horse and rode off full speed.—I felt myself grow faint on a sudden, and sat down upon the grass. Sir Robert was attentive in administering consolation to Mr. Fennell, tortured with his pain.

In a short time the carriage appeared, and Sir Robert wishing to know the surgeon’s opinion of the wound, the latter carefully examined it, and pronounced it dangerous. Mr. Fennell was removed to the carriage, and being supported between Mr. Colton and the surgeon, they gently drove away. As soon as they were gone, I attempted to rise, but found myself unable; my arm was stiff and painful, the wound in my breast was excruciating, and I found myself faint through loss of blood. By the assistance of Sir Robert I arose, and with
much

much difficulty having mounted his horse, he walked by my side all the way to my lodgings. As soon as we arrived, Mr. Brooke came out, and by the assistance of the gentlemen I alighted, and was led up to my room. "Alas! Mr. Wilton, your pale wan looks, this blood upon your clothes, confirm me in the dreadful work you have been acting. I thought, when I parted with you last night, you had altered your resolution."—"Mr. Brooke," interrupted Sir Robert, "let us have some surgical assistance."—Mr. Brooke stepped out and dispatched a servant of the house to Morpeth for a surgeon, who arrived in the space of a quarter of an hour. Upon examination of the wounds, he said the ball had passed through the muscular part of my arm, and that I had lost a great quantity of blood; but thought there was no danger to be apprehended from it. On viewing the wound in my breast, however, he looked more serious, yet hoped there was nothing mortal in it.

He

He carefully dressed both wounds, and I desired him to attend me through the night.—Mr. Brooke made an offer of his services, which I wished to decline; but the good man seemed hurt at my refusal, for which I begged his forgiveness, saying, it was only from my desire to give him no trouble:—He repeated his request, and I acquiesced. Sir Robert then retired.—I had an uneasy night, but after a little rest in the morning perceived myself something better.

Thus, Benfield, we are both invalids, and are become so almost in the same cause: you in the attempt to steal a wife; I in the defence of an honourable attachment.

I am, &c.

LET

L E T T E R XLI.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR.
WILTON.

DEAR SIR,

THE event is answerable to my expectations. You may recollect I predicted, from the character of Mr. Fennell, your late rencounter. His precipitation and ill-usage will sufficiently vindicate you from the impeachment of malice, and justify your conduct before the impartial tribunal of reason, or the venerable laws of your country. From your description of his wound, I conclude he must be in imminent danger. His vengeance may pursue, although it may not be able to overtake you. His vindictive disposition will prompt him to the most villainous undertaking; his disappointed

appointed passion will stimulate him to the commission of any crime; the brutality of his temper, irritated by pain, anguish, and the shame of his defeat—all these causes operating upon his mind, chafed and stung with disgrace and jealousy, will precipitate him to attempt to crush the inoffensive victim of his fury by any violence or contrivance which rage can dictate or jealousy invent.

Impressed with the gloominess of this dreadful idea, I solicit you, by all the tender ties of the most sacred friendship, to a speedy removal from your hermitage at Mitford-Grange, as soon as your health and the anguish of your pain will permit you to come and reside with me: Benfield-Hall shall be a secure asylum until the impending storm be somewhat abated. You may rest assured, if any mortal symptoms should threaten to terminate the existence of Mr. Fennell, his fortune, his interest, and his family, will all be vigorously exerted in the horrid attempt of prosecuting

secuting you to conviction. Should such an unfortunate event happen, the propriety of having an immediate recourse to your relations, connections, and friends, is self-evident, and needs not the support of any argument.

O, Wilton, what are the events of a few months, and what is the felicity which we so vainly and so anxiously promise to ourselves in our fleeting passage through this transitory scene ! Buoyed up with every hope, however trivial ; captivated with every scheme, however fantastic ; we are hurried on from delusion to delusion, from disappointment to disappointment : and such is the unaccountable eagerness of our desires, and the ardency of our wishes, that though we readily acknowledge the futility of our pursuits, still we hope with avidity for a happy conclusion. Happiness is our aim, our wish ; but how frequently by the most inconsistent methods do we attempt the possession ; and how often are we defeated in the attainment, where
we

we placed our chiefest confidence! Disappointment, though corrosive, whets our appetite, and we renew with ardour what experience hath already demonstrated to be futile and unsatisfactory. This strange infatuation may be the primal source of all our pleasures; for since nothing here is permanent, but every thing fleeting and momentary, enjoyment brings not that reality which expectation hoped; we therefore vainly conclude, that futurity will be more liberal, and confer the joys of a lasting fruition.

A few days after my unlucky adventure, your sister's maid waited upon me. She was to have accompanied my dear Antonet to Scotland, and was present during the whole of the transaction. She informed me, that as soon as I had left the wood, Lord Wilton ordered the servants who held her to release her, insisting upon her immediate departure, and at her peril to enter Wilton-Hall again. She remonstrated, and reminded your father that all her clothes

were

were there, and that she had several things to settle with Lady Wilton, which could not be done without her personal attendance. He angrily replied, she could have nothing of consequence to settle, and that if she presumed to enter, he could not answer for her treatment.

In the mean time, the lovely object of all this distraction recovered from the swoon into which terror and affright had thrown her. At intervals she screamed out, "O Benfield, Benfield! where am I? Where are you?" Sometimes she called in a tone very inarticulate on her mother, whilst Lord Wilton railed at and reviled her for her disobedience and ingratitude, commanding the servants to carry her out of the Wood, mount her upon one of the horses, and ride towards the next post town.

Being grieved and distracted at the cruel behaviour of Lord Wilton to her dear young lady, she followed at a distance through the Wood, being concealed by the
gloom

gloom of the night, to observe, if possible, which road they took, and give me intelligence of it. They came to the south avenue of the Wood, where my lovely Antonet was seated involuntarily behind one of the servants; and Lord Wilton at the same time mounting his horse, they rode off with all speed towards the South.

“In this conjuncture,” she continued, “I was utterly at a loss what to do; but after revolving in my mind the possibility that Lord Wilton would not return immediately home, I resolved to go and inform Lady Wilton of what had happened. I went directly to Wilton-Park, and, perceiving all quiet, entered the house without hesitation. Without any previous enquiry I went to Lady Wilton’s room, where I found her sitting in a very pensive attitude, and Sophy reading to her. She no sooner perceived me than she exclaimed, “Alas! where is my daughter!” Her eyes were fixed upon me—she trembled and turned pale.

“I then

“ I then informed her very minutely of
“ every incident that had happened ; ad-
“ ding, that I was afraid Mr. Benfield was
“ killed.”—‘ Mr. Benfield killed ! ’ raising
“ her hands and eyes, ‘ Merciful Heaven ! ’
—“ Her hands fell—her eyes closed—she
“ fell breathless upon the floor. Being in
“ a dreadful consternation for my Lady,
“ by the assistance of Sophy I raised her, and,
“ applying the usual means for her recovery,
“ she again came to herself. I begged par-
“ don for the terrible fright I had given her,
“ hoping she would forgive me. Lady
“ Wilton answered, ‘ Jenny, I have long
“ known your fidelity—it hath now ruined
“ you. Go, collect and pack up every
“ thing you have ; there is a ten pound
“ note—a small gratuity for all your for-
“ mer services. Leave Wilton-Park to-
“ night, lest Lord Wilton should return.
“ The first opportunity you have, wait up-
“ on Mr. Benfield, and tell him I recom-
“ mend you to his care.’

“ I immediately obeyed my Lady’s orders, and left Wilton-Park with a heart overwhelmed with sorrow.”

Here the poor girl wept bitterly, and I believe her grief was real. I desired her to be comforted, as I should deem it my indispensable duty to provide for her until she could obtain another place ; adding, that probably she might again have the happiness to serve her young lady. “ Heaven send that day soon !” replied she, “ for I shall never know what it is to be happy until I am assured that my sweet young lady is completely so.”

She retired weeping, whilst I reflected maturely on all the horrid evils which your father’s obstinacy has brought upon his once happy family. A son banished, for not implicitly complying with commands which must have entailed misery and wretchedness upon himself to the latest period of his existence ; and in the manly defence of his honour, now lying on a bed of languishment and horror : a daughter

daughter lost, torn from her family, and hurried away by the merciless hands of an enraged father, to pass her hours in an unavailing sorrow amidst the solitary gloom of some rigorous confinement: a wife, the most amiable of her sex, sinking beneath the heavy pressure of domestic trouble and the bitterness of ill-usage.—When will these evils terminate! Wilton, come to me; my patience is exhausted, and I want a little of your philosophy to calm the agitation of my mind. My wounds plague and torment me; yet I should suffer them more patiently, could I only discover how Lord Wilton received his information.

I am, dear WILTON, ever your's,

J. B.

C 2

LET.

LETTER XLII.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR.
BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

I AM very sorry to observe you are still under the necessity of employing an amanuensis; yet I hope you will in a few days be able to handle that dreadful weapon, a goose-quill.

From the perusal of your last I am much disappointed, as it neither informed me of the fate of my dear unfortunate sister, nor how your elopement was discovered. This has given me some uneasiness, and I shall remain in the utmost perplexity till I am informed how your plot was betrayed. It appears evident to me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that my
father

father hath had his private emissaries, by whom he hath been apprized of all your movements, and enabled to disconcert and prevent your schemes in the very moment of their completion.

Confidence, Benfield, is frequently misplaced, and especially among servants, who are mere dependents upon our bounty, and who very often find it more their interest to betray the charge reposed in them, than to observe it with punctuality. In confidence, where there is a reciprocation of benefits, an interchange of good offices, or a mutual attachment, there is no lucrative incentive to promote a discovery, and consequently a secret is preserved. But when a domestic is entrusted with a case of sufficient importance, where discovery will reward him more than secrecy, we ought to place very little reliance upon his integrity. This accusation I would by no means level at every menial dependent. It would be altogether ungenerous and illiberal, thus indiscriminately to as-

perse the probity of those whom Providence, in his infinite wisdom, hath placed in such humble spheres, that their servitude and dependence are subservient to our ease, opulence, and pleasure.

Every class of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, is linked by an indissoluble chain, which you cannot destroy, nor forcibly attack, without a visible derangement and apparent confusion of the whole society. And though many are so supercilious as to despise the lower orders, there are others so wise and prudent as to esteem them the most useful and infinitely the most beneficial amongst the various classes of society.—But enough at present of moral maxims.

I had an agreeable visit in the afternoon from Sir Robert, Lady Bertram, Olivia, and Mr. Brooke. Lady Bertram came running to my bedside, and anxiously enquired after my health. I answered her kind enquiries by saying, I thought I was not much worse, though I found myself
weak

weak from my loss of blood, and hoped I should be able to sit up to-morrow. "Here, Mr. Wilton," said Lady Bertram, taking Olivia by the hand, and leading her to the bedside—"here is a doctor "who will cure you in half the time." I held out my hand to take hold of my charming angel, when Lady Bertram added, "Why don't you feel his pulse?" I saw Olivia's previous emotion, but this wild folly quite overwhelmed her with confusion. She stood motionless—her countenance was suffused with a crimson blush, and her eyes were sometimes cast upon the floor, and sometimes wistfully upon me:—the crimson blush fled her cheek—a livid paleness usurped its place, and I perceived in her face a visible alteration. Lady Bertram took her hand and gave it to me, saying, "Come, come, Olivia, "you are as nice and squeamish as though "we did not know already the state of "your heart.—Poor tender thing! Indeed, "Mr. Wilton, I thought it would have

“ burst yesterday afternoon with the bare
“ apprehension of the crack of a pistol.”
—Olivia replied, “ You thought, Lady
“ Bertram, to have deceived me, by strictly
“ persisting that the whole affair originated
“ from a jest; but Sir Robert’s
“ silence and evasive answers, with your
“ assumed levity and uncommon spright-
“ liness, confirmed my suspicions, before
“ I was informed of the real truth by Mr.
“ Brooke. The veil was too thin to screen
“ the horror of the action.—And how could
“ you, Wilton, so notoriously transgress
“ against the sacred bonds of humanity,
“ as to be guilty of the dreadful attempt of
“ sending a thoughtless soul, or rushing vo-
“ luntarily yourself, into the awful presence
“ of your Omnipotent Creator, uncalled,
“ and unprepared?” This was expressed
with so much sweetness, with such a look
of tenderness and complacency, as quite
deprived me of the power of articulation
for a few seconds, and prevented my im-
mediate reply. I kept hold of her hand,
and,

and, from a consciousness of the immorality of my conduct, replied, " My dear Olivia, I am already self-condemned ; do not therefore accuse me of this flagrant infringement of all laws human and divine, since I not only disapprove but really abhor the influence of that savage custom, which has given a sanction to so detestable and inhuman a practice. But believe me when I assert, that whilst life animates this body, no provocation, no insult whatever shall stimulate me to the horrid wish of revenge."

All this time Sir Robert and Mr. Brooke were in close conversation with the surgeon, while I was so much more agreeably employed, that I never attempted to listen to one syllable—when Lady Bertram said, " Finish your consultation : I am confident in averring, that this female doctor will do more by a single squeeze of the hand, than all the boluses and applications which the whole

“Materia Medica can administer, to-
“wards restoring this convalescent to his
“former vigour. Come here, Mr. Brooke;
“see, I have joined their hands, do you
“say the ceremony.”—“O fye, Lady
“Bertram,” said Olivia, “why all this
“vivacity? Mr. Wilton stands more
“in need of consolation than you ima-
“gine.”—“Very well, child,” replied
Lady Bertram; “and who so proper to
“administer the balm of consolation to a
“wounded husband as a wife, yea the
“wife of his bosom!” Olivia replied
with a “Psha, psha! your raillery, tho’
“innocent, is ill-timed;”—whilst I said,
“I perfectly assent, Lady Bertram, to the
“truth of your assertion: I want conso-
“lation; and who so proper to console me
“as the only object of my affections, for
“whom I suffer, and for whom I here lie
“wounded and bleeding—an alien from
“my family---discarded by my father---
“my life pursued and sought for by the
“vindictive spirit of revenge---perhaps this
“mo-

“moment some dreadful scheme of vengeance may be hatching.”—“O Wilton! peace, peace,” cried Olivia, gently pressing my hand by an involuntary motion. The pressure was so congenial to my wishes, so inspiring to my hopes, that by an intuitive impulse I attempted to rise. “See, doctor,” exclaimed Lady Bertram, “your patient hath already forgot his infirmity, and he means to hobble to the Temple of Hymen.” Sir Robert persuaded me to be patient, and not presume too much upon my present weakness, as too early an exertion might endanger a speedy relapse. I was conscious of the impropriety of the attempt, and the anguish proceeding from the wound in my breast pleaded with so much efficacy, that I quietly disposed myself according to their admonitions.

After a few scenes more of hilarity from Lady Bertram, some cautionary maxims from Sir Robert, and some very wise and prudential aphorisms from my surgeon,

the company retired, and left me alone with the good Mr. Brooke ; who, seating himself by my bedside, said, “ Mr. Wil-
“ ton, the anxiety which I felt for your
“ personal safety the day on which this
“ unfortunate duel was fought, could on-
“ ly be equalled by the silent yet appa-
“ rent sorrow of Olivia. After I had de-
“ livered you her letter, and attempted
“ to dissuade you from a performance of
“ your promise by arguments which I
“ deemed rational and solid, and to the
“ force of which you seemed to assent,
“ yet I departed with a full assurance that
“ you did not intend to adhere to them.
“ I found Olivia waiting for my return,
“ who anxiously enquired after the suc-
“ cess of my embassy. I consoled her
“ with the hopes of your not accepting
“ the challenge of Mr. Fennell, and she
“ retired, expressing her apprehensions lest
“ you should acquiesce with so inhuman
“ a custom.

“ She

“ She returned next morning in company with Lady Bertram. I no sooner
“ saw her than I perceived the perturbation of her mind. Fixing my eyes
“ stedfastly upon her, she turned away in manifest confusion:—she was remarkably grave and sedate, and wished to
“ conceal her uneasiness under an assumed solemnity. I admired the coolness of
“ her demeanor, although I supposed I saw something of constraint. Lady
“ Bertram said, ‘ Mr. Brooke, shall I depute you to go and call upon Mr. Wilton, and if he has no business of importance, bring him to the Vicarage with you. We will wait here for your return.’—I came, but found you not.
“ When I returned, and informed the ladies you had walked forth, Lady Bertram looked at Olivia very seriously.—
“ Olivia was silent—her colour changed—
“ —a heavy sigh heaved her swelling bosom.—Lady Bertram arose, and, going
“ towards her, took her hand, saying,
“ Shall

“ Shall we, my dear, walk home?” Be-
“ ing answered in the affirmative, I was re-
“ quested to accompany them. When we
“ arrived, Sir Robert was gone out. Olivia
“ retired to her chamber, and continuing
“ there much longer than usual, Lady Ber-
“ tram was anxious for her return.—Lady
“ Bertram walked up-stairs, and presently
“ returning, with much anxiety in her
“ countenance, desired I would follow her;
“ adding, ‘ I will shew you a sight worthy
“ of an angel.’—She walked gently for-
“ ward, and I followed.—We approached a
“ door that was half open :—there we ob-
“ served Olivia upon her knees—her hands
“ were clasped—her eyes cast upwards—
“ her words we heard very indistinctly, but
“ what we could collect were fervent peti-
“ tions to the God of Mercy for the pro-
“ tection of your person. After she had
“ finished her devotions, she sobbed deeply ;
“ but after a short interval her tears gave
“ a relief to her sorrow. Having some-
“ what composed herself, she arose, and in-
“ stantly

stantly espied us. Lady Bertram entered, and leading her forth, her confusion was so manifest at our discovery, that she hid her blushes with her handkerchief. Being come into the parlour, she said, ‘O Lady Bertram, was this well done! thus to break in upon my privacy!’ — ‘My dear Olivia, I was anxious for your peace, which, and not curiosity, led me to your chamber. Forgive me, my dear, and do not be ashamed because Mr. Brooke hath witnessed the goodness of your heart.’ — ‘Ah, Madam, but I have betrayed the weakness of my heart, already torn with anguish.’ — Her grief became too powerful, and her tears began to flow, notwithstanding all her efforts to prevent them. — ‘Forgive me, Lady Bertram, — forgive me, Mr. Brooke;’ — and she hurried out of the room.

‘I came again to call upon you, but you were not returned. My fears were prevalent and boding. — I waited above an hour.

“ hour. Upon my return to Bertram-Hall,
“ Sir Robert had rode out, and sent his
“ servant home upon some frivolous pre-
“ tence. This, with other concurring cir-
“ cumstances, corroborated my suspicions,
“ and convinced me that the horrid work
“ of death was going forward. I could no
“ longer conceal my solicitude.—Lady Ber-
“ tram perceived it, and said, ‘ I adjure
“ you, Mr. Brooke, not to keep me in
“ suspense; has any misfortune befallen
“ Mr. Wilton?’ — Olivia entered, and
“ heard the last part of the sentence.—She
“ looked earnestly on Lady Bertram, then
“ upon me—was silent:—her fears presaged
“ the worst—she stood like a statue rivet-
“ ed to the spot.—I led her to a chair, and
“ seating her, I observed her eye to be fixed
“ —her features were immoveable, and she
“ remained insensible to all our cares, soli-
“ citations and enquiries. Lady Bertram
“ tenderly kissed her, looked wistfully at
“ me, and wrung her hands in silent an-
“ guish.—At last she said, ‘ Alas, Mr.
“ Brooke !

“ Brooke! — my dear child, my dear
“ child!’—I endeavoured to console her,
“ and advised that Olivia should be put to
“ bed. This was complied with, and she
“ remained in a state of torpid insensibility,
“ or rather delirium, for above an hour.
“ Lady Bertram wept, kissed her, and
“ fondly hung over her, lamenting the un-
“ happiness of her situation. At length a
“ deep sigh burst from her bosom :—she
“ turned her head toward Lady Bertram,
“ and perceiving her overwhelmed with
“ sorrow, held out her hand, saying, ‘What
“ makes my dear Lady Bertram weep?’—
“ God be praised for this recovery!’ said
“ Lady Bertram; ‘how do you find your-
“ self, my dear child?’—‘Rather sick;
“ I hope I shall be better presently.’—I
“ left her to the care of Lady Bertram,
“ and silently took my leave.
“ Shortly after Sir Robert entered.—
“ Olivia, who was very quiet before his
“ entrance, was now violently agitated.—
“ Lady Bertram trembled:—but after taking
“ Sir

“ Sir Robert aside, and talking with him a-
“ while, she came to the bedside, and said,
“ My dear Olivia, be comforted, Mr.
“ Wilton is well—the dreadful business is
“ compromised.’—‘ Ah, Lady Bertram,
“ do you not deceive me?’—‘ Let Sir
“ Robert, who was present, assure you of
“ the truth.’—Sir Robert came forward,
“ and, taking her hand and tenderly kissing
“ it, said, ‘ Believe me, my dear child,
“ Mr. Wilton is returned safe to the
“ Grange.’—She received his assurance
“ with apparent pleasure—her counte-
“ nance brightened, and her spirits seemed
“ to assume their wonted vigour. Obser-
“ ving this happy change in Olivia, Sir
“ Robert favoured them with a true ac-
“ count of the unfortunate affair.

“ Lady Bertram, who informed me of
“ these last particulars, said, she was afraid
“ of a fever, as some slight symptoms ap-
“ peared ; but by the timely operation of
“ some medical assistance, they soon disap-
“ peared. She had a quiet night, and slept
“ pro-

“ profoundly, by which she was enabled
“ to walk abroad this morning.—And thus,
“ Mr. Wilton, I have given you a true
“ account of what this sweet young lady
“ hath suffered from her affection to you.”

“ Mr. Brooke,” I replied, “ for all
“ this sincere attention I can only repay
“ you with my thanks. Fortune, I hope,
“ will one day prove more propitious, when
“ I shall be enabled to return your bene-
“ volence and acknowledge your kindness
“ in a manner suitable to my wish and de-
“ serving of your approbation. At present
“ I feel no pain. Convinced, from your
“ recital, that I am blessed with the
“ affections of my dear Olivia, this con-
“ viction will operate more to my re-
“ covery than all the medicines which art
“ can administer. Mr. Brooke, be so
“ obliging as to call in the evening; the
“ surgeon will retire soon, and by your
“ assistance I will attempt to rise, as I
“ do not think I am either so ill or so
“ weak as he endeavours to persuade me.”

Mr.

Mr. Brooke promised that he would call upon me, and left the room.

Thus, Benfield, I am happy in imagination; but when I reflect upon your disaster, in the very moment when you least expected it, my happiness vanishes, and leaves nothing behind but a delusive void.

Inclosed you have a copy of a letter which I have received from my father, with my answer to it.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

FROM THE EARL OF WILTON TO THE
HON. MR. WILTON.

SIR,

HAVING taken a determined resolution to sell the Wilton estate, and as your acquiescence will somewhat facilitate the business, I request that you will give your consent. The highest legal authority has been consulted on the practicability of my purpose; and as there is no difficulty, no obstacle, which can prevent my determination, your ready coincidence will gratify me more than your opposition can impede the execution.

As a voluntary gratuity for your obedience in this exigence, you shall receive the sum of ten thousand pounds, on condition of relinquishing all future claims to the estate. This sum you
may

may probably not deem equivalent to the sacrifice you are requested to make; but then I beg you to consider, I have it in my power to execute what I require of you without any compensation whatever. This consideration ought to have its due influence in your final decision, as I offer it from a wish that you may live independent through life, without being compelled to have recourse to any dishonourable employment to procure a scanty subsistence.

This care for your future support proceeds from the small remains of parental affection which your ingratitude hath not yet obliterated in my bosom; and it solely depends upon your own conduct in the present instance, whether they shall be cherished or totally erased. You are conscious that your opposition to my will, when I was planning a scheme for your felicity, deserves my severest reprehension; and although your disobedience hath forfeited my esteem, yet my parental
regard

regard suggests this proposition for your future welfare.

If you consent for the sum of ten thousand pounds to forego all right and claim to the Wilton estate, you may signify your approbation by the return of the post. If you withhold your consent—beware of the consequences.

I remain

Your much offended,

injured, and insulted father,

WILTON.

LET.

LETTER XLIV.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO
THE EARL OF WILTON.

HONOURED FATHER,

I AM favoured with your's relative to the sale of the Wilton estate. I must confess I was not more surpris'd at the refusal, than astonish'd at the very extraordinary measure which it suggests. My conduct, if faulty, is certainly pardonable; and if I have only offended in one instance, why, my father, should I for ever forfeit my claim to the Wilton estate and your affection? O reconsider the business; think I am your only son; let the affection of a parent plead in my behalf, and certainly you will not then determine to disinherit me. Forgive this single instance of disobedience, and it shall be the study of my

my future life to please, to serve, to reverence you.

Why, O why, my ever-honoured father, should I be a castaway, an alien from your affection, and a lonesome wanderer through the intricate labyrinths of life! Let my penitence atone for my seeming ingratitude, and let my future behaviour be the test of my unalienable affection for you. If you can place any reliance on the assurances of a son, who hath once, and only once, offended you, I give you my filial promise never to marry any woman without your consent and approbation. Let this extenuate my crime and palliate my offence; let me return with joy to the embraces of a father, the endearments of a mother, and the sweet intercourse of my beloved sisters. Why should we be separated? Every trespass of this kind is certainly venial; and if we forgive not, how shall we expect to be forgiven at the day of final retribution?

VOL. III.

D

Your

Your proposal, my honoured father, I am sorry to acquaint you, meets not with my acquiescence. Ten thousand pounds is a poor equivalent for such a sacrifice as you require; and though I reject your requisition, I hope you will not construe this rejection as a fresh instance of my disobedience. It is a duty I owe to you, to myself, my family, to posterity; and however you may now receive my refusal, I hope you will one day acknowledge that my present conduct is not reprehensible.

Present my duty and love to my honoured mother and sisters, assuring them, my heart lives with them at Wilton-Park.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR.
BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

IN the morning Mr. Brooke called upon me, according to his promise. The surgeon, after dressing my wounds, had left me about half an hour before. He kindly enquired what was the surgeon's opinion, and if I supposed there would be any danger in attempting to rise, as I had expressed an eager desire to try the experiment.—“Pshaw, Mr. Brooke, I do not mean, I assure you, to lie lingering here until the surgeon pronounces his professional *fiat*, and tells me I am well. Lend me your hand.”—He immediately gave me what assistance I required, and I arose without much difficulty, dressed without any pain, but did not attempt to put on

D 2

my

my coat. Throwing it over my shoulders, I walked across the floor, and was scarcely sensible of any weakness or infirmity.

Sitting down, I told Mr. Brooke I had no particular relish for the pills and the potions prescribed by my surgical director, and hoped he would be so obliging as to turn the key of my closet, and set a bottle of wine upon the table. He smiled at my orders, but did not hesitate in the execution. I then asked him, if he had heard any report concerning Mr. Fennell. He said he had not heard one syllable.

We had not sat many minutes, when my hostess entered, and told me, there was a woman at the door, of the name of Moreton, who desired to speak with me. I requested she might be shewn in. She entered—anxiety and enquiry were pictured in her looks. I desired her to be seated. She said, “I hope, Sir, you will
“pardon my intrusion. My sorrow for
“your misfortune prompted me to call
“and enquire after your health, as I
“should

“ should have deemed myself void of
“ gratitude had I neglected this duty to
“ a gentleman whose bounty hath added
“ a gleam of peace to my days, and
“ saved the precious lives of my sweet
“ innocent babes.”—“ Mrs Moreton, your
“ gratitude and kindness have more than
“ repaid me. May your days all be
“ peaceful, and your children live to be
“ a comfort and support to your age,
“ when the days shall come in which you
“ will have no pleasure.” I added, that I
was much better, and hoped in a few days
to be perfectly recovered.—“ I shall thank
“ the God of Heaven (replied she) for his
“ providential interposition in your fa-
“ vour, in protecting the friend of the
“ widow and the orphan from such immi-
“ nent danger, and I shall teach my chil-
“ dren to pray for your life and safety.
“ They found a father in you, when their
“ natural father forsook them, and left
“ them, poor helpless suppliants ! to the
“ mercy of a ruthless world.”—Her com-

plaint recalled to her remembrance some of her former happy scenes—she wiped away the tear as it rolled down her cheek, and endeavoured to suppress her grief:—her attempt was in vain—she arose, curtsied, and retired.

I forgot to mention to you, that I have frequently met this worthy woman at the Vicarage, and concerted various schemes for her future support; and at last, by the advice of Mr. Brooke, have determined to set her up in a shop, by which she may be enabled to provide for herself and little ones. Should I succeed in this my well-meant endeavour, I shall esteem it a particular happiness to have administered consolation to the wretched, mitigated the load of misery, and given bread to the hungry. This, Benfield, is a pleasure I am particularly proud of, and gives me more solid satisfaction and real joy than all the sensual pleasures of which the most dissipated libertine can participate. It is lasting, and will bear the re-
collection;

collection ; whilst the turpitude of all sensual gratifications grates upon the memory, impairs the constitution, and leaves behind it, a hateful deformity.

We finished our bottle with cheerfulness, and I was very sensible that it operated more effectually towards the revival of my spirits and the invigoration of my health, than if I had drank water-gruel for twelve months.

Three days passed without any thing happening that is worthy of-recapitulation. On the fourth I found myself so much recovered that I dressed and walked to Bertram-Hall. I was congratulated on my appearance abroad by the worthy family with all the sincerity of unfeigned friendship. Olivia alone seemed melancholy and pensive. I could not divine the cause, and I found myself uneasy and discontented. So thin is the partition between happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, that we frequently experience the extreme of both in the revolution of a few minutes.

She was standing in a musing posture before the window. I advanced towards her, and tenderly enquired the cause of her seriousness; when she sighed and said, "O, Mr. Wilton, I am born to be unhappy—I am really the child of misfortune"—and then abruptly left the room.

The gloom of thoughtfulness which her expressions and abrupt departure on a sudden spread over my mind was visible to Sir Robert and Lady Bertram. Sir Robert addressing himself to me, asked if I was well. "Very well, Sir Robert, but my present pensiveness results from the dread that Olivia is a victim to some corroding melancholy."—"I hope not," replied Lady Bertram; "but her struggles have been violent and her efforts powerful, which may have produced some debilitating effect upon her delicate frame. Her resolution is too much for her strength, but I hope a few days will perfectly re-establish her health."—"Added to this," said Sir Robert, "Mr. Longford

“ Longford was here yesterday, and seemed
“ much more deranged than usual, as he
“ was quite importunate with Olivia to
“ appoint their wedding-day. This delu-
“ sive idea he has long harboured, and be-
“ ing apprized of your rencounter with
“ Mr. Fennell, he laughs immoderately
“ at the duel, reprehends the folly of
“ the combatants, and says he shall be
“ the happy man, though you fight it
“ over again. The unhappy state of his
“ intellects seems to have had some effect
“ upon Olivia, as she is more pensive and
“ thoughtful than she was before he
“ came.”

I walked into the garden and found the lovely creature sitting in the arbour, her cheek reclined upon her hand, and reading. I walked towards her, when she arose. The subject of her meditation was Sherlock on Death. I asked her, why she chose so melancholy an entertainment? She answered, “ The subject, Mr. Wilton, “ is momentous ; and since it is a debt we

“ have all one day to pay, it behoves us
“ to consider it seriously, that we may
“ discharge it with a becoming fortitude.”
I wished to divert her thoughts from this
melancholy contemplation, and replied,
“ I coincide with your observations ; but
“ may I presume to enquire the cause of
“ those expressions which you uttered,
“ when you left the parlour ?”—“ Have
“ I not sufficient cause, Sir? Have not the
“ events of a few days been productive of
“ various disasters ; and am not I the inno-
“ cent, unoffending cause ?”—“ Let not,
“ my dearest Olivia, the remembrance of
“ such egregious folly prey upon your
“ mind and disturb your peace. It is
“ now over ; it will be forgotten and bu-
“ ried in oblivion in less time than it was
“ in the contrivance.”—“ Ah, Mr. Wil-
“ ton, you know not the man ! His ma-
“ lice, inveterate and notorious, will not
“ be easily mitigated. If he lives, which
“ the God of Mercy grant, he will pur-
“ sue you with unrelenting vengeance.”—
“ And

“And are you, my angel, so thoughtful
“for my safety? Lay aside your fears.
“I trust in an all-seeing Providence and
“the laws of my country for protection.”
—“Ah, Wilton! my fears are pre-
“saging.”—“Let them then, Olivia,
“presage happiness and returning hila-
“rity to both our bosoms!” I put one
arm round her waist, the other was slung
in a handkerchief.—“Shall I hope, that
“when the cheering ray of comfort dis-
“sipates your present fears, shall I pre-
“sume to hope you will deign to esta-
“blish my happiness on a lasting basis,
“by accepting of one who is altogether
“unworthy of you?”—“Believe me,
“Wilton, I am above disguise, and have
“not a wish at present to conceal the
“bias of my heart from you; but, how-
“ever inclination may plead in your fa-
“vour, there are circumstances in my
“case which may operate as impedi-
“ments with you, which will not be easily
“developed. You must spare me the
D 6 “recital,

“recital—it is delicate—it would be af-
“fictive—I ingenuously refer you to Sir
“Robert.”—“What circumstances, Oli-
“via, can impede our union, founded on
“a reciprocal affection? You refer me to
“Sir Robert: to him I will then imme-
“diately apply, and solicit his consent to
“a speedy consummation of our mutual
“happiness.”—“Be not too precipitate,
“Sir, nor yet too sanguine. Happiness is not
“always the reward of mutual affection;
“and the more eager your expectation,
“the more fatal may be your disappoint-
“ment.”—“Talk not of disappointment,
“my Olivia; can I be unhappy when
“possessed of you?” I impressed a fervid
kiss upon her lips—she permitted it with-
out reluctance—our embraces were reci-
procal—my ecstasy inexpressible.—In this
tender union of affection we were assailed
with, “Oh, oh, have I caught you?
“What, billing in my presence, and
“with my wife!”—Mr. Longford was
standing opposite to us, and who continued
his rhapsodical exclamation as follows:
“My

" My time, O ye Muses, I happily spent,

" When Phœbe went with me wherever I went.

" My grandmother sung that song delight-

" fully—I will not be jealous—jealousy is

" a rank weed, it grows in every clime.—

" Blow, blow, ye winds; ye trees, shake.—

" Come, come, Olivia, let us go to Mr.

" Brooke, he will marry us immediately."

—" Not at present, Mr. Longford, you

" must excuse me," replied Olivia. " What

" are you afraid of? (returned he) Mar-

" riage is not a poor-tax.—

" The lasses of Tyne.

" They go so fine,

" We'll all to coquet and woo.—

" Our chamber-maid sings that sweetly."—

" Poor soul!" said Olivia; " what would

" I give for the restoration of thy intel-

" lects!"—" Do you pity me, Olivia?

" Here, take this woodbine, smell it—it

" is very sweet, and won't do you half

" the harm that a bloody husband will.

—" Hush, hush, don't tell secrets.—

" Blood, blood, wounds, gaping wounds,

" are

"are not fit companions for a lady's ear.

"I'll fight none, Olivia—

"Assume the God, affect the nod,

"And seem to shake the spheres.—

"Blood cries for blood."—

All this time I held Olivia's hand grasped in mine.—She trembled—I looked at her—her colour changed to a deadly pale.

"Let us go, Mr. Wilton," said she, in a whisper, "and let me advise you to with-

"draw. Your presence adds to his

"disorder." I wished she would avoid his company, as it seemed to discompose her; and, recommending her particularly to be attentive to her own health, left her sighing for poor Mr. Longford.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

THAT I might not be interrupted in my application to Sir Robert by the unseasonable intervention of poor Longford, I sent a card to him, requesting the honour of his company in the evening. He was punctual in his attendance. Being seated, I addressed him thus: "Sir Robert, it was with your acquiescence that I paid my addresses to Olivia at first; and having been so fortunate as to merit her attention, and gain her affection, she has ingenuously referred me to you for a developement of some mysterious circumstances relative to herself, which she kindly confesses
" would

“ would be afflictive to her from the re-
“ cital ” — “ Mr. Wilton,” Sir Robert
answered, “ it was never my wish to lay
“ the least restraint upon the inclinations
“ of Olivia ; I always deemed her ca-
“ pable of judging and determining for
“ herself, even in the important article
“ of marriage. Conscious of her pro-
“ priety in chusing a partner for life, I
“ have carefully attended to the bias of
“ her affections, in the many liberal offers
“ she hath been honoured with, and can-
“ didly acknowledge, she hath not in-
“ this instance deceived me.” — “ Your
“ partiality, Sir Robert, I confess, does
“ me honour, and I hope our alliance
“ will not diminish it.” — “ Here, Mr.
“ Wilton, you are probably under a mis-
“ take. Your alliance with Olivia will
“ prove none with my family. She is no
“ daughter, she is no relation of mine,
“ as common fame reports her.—You
“ seem amazed ! Believe me, what I assert is
“ nothing but the truth. You have acted
“ openly

“openly and generously. I know you to
“be the son and heir of Lord Wilton.
“At present suppress your curiosity. The
“day that unites your hands, a fortune of
“fifty thousand pounds awaits you. This
“I give to the merit of my adopted
“daughter.”—“Although, Sir Robert,
“you have excited my curiosity, I wish
“not to pry further than your candour
“will allow.”—“Mr. Wilton, before your
“union is completed, every particular
“relative to the lady shall be explained to
“your satisfaction.”—“My warmest ac-
“knowledgements are due to your friend-
“ship, Sir Robert.”—“No complimen-
“tary apology, Mr. Wilton. I am
“amazed we hear nothing of Mr. Fen-
“nell; I hope his wounds are not dan-
“gerous; and yet the studied silence that
“seems to be preserved is certainly no
“favourable presage.”—“Whatever be
“the event, Sir Robert, I shall calmly
“await the decision of the laws of my
“country. I was insulted, challenged,
“dragged

“ dragged into the necessity of self-defence; and if I have been so fortunate as to be the instrument to chastise such insolence, I shall firmly rely on that Power who will not finally suffer Innocence to be wronged, and Arrogance to triumph.”

After a short general conversation Sir Robert retired.

The next morning I was anxious to acquaint the worthy Mr. Brooke with my success, and the hopes of my future happiness. I went to the Vicarage; but, alas! the good man was now no more! One of those fatal accidents with which this chequered life is attended, and which human prudence can neither foresee nor prevent, had deprived this benevolent man of his existence.

When I came to the gate, I observed a croud of people by the side of the river.—I walked towards them—the gloom of silent sorrow reigned amongst them—they were the inhabitants of the village.—I enquired the cause why they were assembled there;

there; when one of them pointing his finger, —I looked, and, O Benfield! beheld a sight of woe! Poor Brooke was lying on the margin of the Wansbeck cold, stiff, and lifeless.

He had been sent for to baptize a child early in the morning. Upon his return the river was swelled—there was no other passage than stones placed about two feet asunder, and near three feet high—the water just running over them:—he had slipped off one of the stones, and was unfortunately drowned.

I desired them to bear home the body, and walked to Bertram-Hall to acquaint the family with the misfortune. I no sooner entered than I perceived they were already apprized of the loss of their real Christian Pastor. Sir Robert was sitting with his arms folded, leaning against the back of his chair, pensive and thoughtful. Lady Bertram had been in tears, but her grief was somewhat abated. Olivia was sitting with Sherlock in her hand.

As

As soon as she saw me, she said, "O, Mr. Wilton, poor Mr. Brooke is ——" her grief overcame her, and her tears plentifully bedewed her pallid cheeks. I attempted to console her, but found the inefficacy of such an attempt, as the fullness of my own heart totally prevented my intention. I asked Sir Robert if he would walk to the Vicarage, as our presence in this melancholy exigence might prove consolatory. "Right," said Sir Robert, starting from his reverie—"Poor Brooke! you deserved a better fate.—Let us go."

When we entered, Mrs. Brooke presented to our eyes the image of Distraction, but not actuated by the silent springs of sorrow. She was tearing her hair, beating her breast, and raving with all the symptomatic wildness of a maniac. I consoled with her, and endeavoured by a variety of arguments to alleviate her distress. She listened, became more rational, and at last her grief subsided into a placid calm. In the mean time,

Sir

Sir Robert was giving directions for the funeral, as Mrs. Brooke seemed wholly incapacitated for so sorrowful a charge.

The day he was to be interred, the whole inhabitants of the parish were assembled in the church-yard, and with anxiety, with silence, and with sorrow, to see their worthy and benevolent Pastor laid in the grave. During the ceremony all were silent, solemn, and attentive. When the body was committed to the earth, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," their grief was no longer to be restrained, and in the whole company there was not one dry eye to be seen. Most of them returned to their homes, but some individuals remained at the grave, descanting on his virtues, humility, and piety. This I deem to be the worthiest tribute that can be paid to the memory of a Minister of the Gospel.

Mr. Brooke had been twice married ; and by his first wife had one daughter, who had lived with her grandfather by the mother's side since his second marriage, which

which was not approved of by his relations. She was about sixteen, graceful, lovely, and in her grief more beautiful. She was inconsolable; yet an endeavour to assuage her sorrow gave birth to the following Elegy.

THE ORPHAN. AN ELEGY.

I.

Where silver Wansbeck rolls his crystal tide,
And laves the margin with a gurgling surge;
Where rushes murmur, and where fishes glide,
Dart thro' the stream, or thro' the waves emerge;

II.

The gentle Anna, 'neath a branching plane,
Whose verdant foliage spread a deep'ning shade,
Wail'd to the breezes in a sorrowing strain,
The sweetest mourner, and the fairest maid.

III.

Scarce sixteen summers o'er her head had run,
And smooth'd her face with beauty's blooming dye;
Yet rosy Health and sprightly Love begun
To tinge her cheek, and glisten in her eye.

IV. Her

IV.

Her raven locks play'd gently in the breeze,
Her flowing vesture careless trail'd behind :
Upon her forehead sat no smile of ease,
The genuine index of a troubled mind.

V.

The broad-orb'd regent of the parting day
Had flaming sunk beneath yon western hill ;
No more his beams upon old Wansbeck play,
No more they glitter on yon tinkling rill.

VI.

The mild-rob'd regent of the silent night
Just peep'd with silver visage from the sea ;
No more the warbler wings his rapid flight,
No more the plover whistles o'er the lea.

VII.

The howling wind, in solemn silence hush'd,
Shook not the leaves upon the branching pine ;
No footstep rude along the meadow brush'd,
Where Anna did in harrowing grief recline.

VIII.

In this sweet calm, beneath the plane-tree's shade,
The gentle mourner, with complexion wan,
Where velvet moss a verdant carpet made,
Her bosom heav'd, and, wailing, thus began :

IX. "Thou

IX.

“Thou parent stream, along whose sedgy side,
In careless mood, my infant years I pass’d,
Now o’er thy pebbles roll thy hateful tide,
The gloom of sorrow o’er my brow is cast.

X.

“No more, with playful step, upon thy brink
I’ll cheerful lead the choral band along;
Nor view thy finny tenants sport and drink,
Nor tread thy margin ’midst the laughing throng.

XI.

“The fragrant flow’ret on thy sedgy bank,
Which oft I’ve cropp’d to weave the vernal wreath,
The primrose pale, the golden cowslip dank,
Shall bloom, nor brand me for their annual death.

XII.

“These infant pastimes, here, I bid adieu!
Which joy and comfort gave my youthful mind;
Each rising morn brought Pleasure to my view,
That Pleasure’s fled, and carking Woe’s behind.

XIII.

“Thou silent moon, that from thy silver sphere
Dost sleeping mortals watch with social ray,
Could’st thou no aid afford a parent dear,
No glimmering beam to guide his watery way?

XIV. O,

XIV.

“ O cruel Wansbeck, how I hate thy stream,
Which fondly I’ve in lisping accents sung !
From morn till night made thee my darling theme,
And round the knees of my fond parent clung :

XV.

“ That dear-lov’d parent, who in hapless hour,
’Midst the dark horrors of night’s dreary gloom,
Plung’d ’mongst thy billows, whilst no friendly power
Was present, to prevent his cheerless doom !

XVI.

“ O cruel Wansbeck, why those roaring waves,
Which burst thy channel in that dismal hour;
The trembling surge, which the green margin laves,
Rolls o’er its bounds with wild resistless power !

XVII.

“ Who could behold without a weeping eye,
Who could behold, and no assistance give,
A fellow-creature ’midst these billows lie,
Who vainly struggled, and who wish’d to live !

XVIII.

“ Curs’d be the eye that could the sight behold !
Curs’d be the hand which no assistance gave !
My parent then, amongst thy pebbles cold
Had never sunk, nor found a wat’ry grave.

XIX.

“ But now he’s gone, and who with watchful eye
Shall lead my heedless steps to ripen’d age,
Point to the scene where lurking evils lie,
Correct my crimes, my throbbing woes assuage?

XX.

“ My other parent, gentle, just, and good,
My infant weakness scarcely ever knew;
Her softening kindness felt, not understood,
Till from my knowledge she for ever flew.

XXI.

“ An helpless orphan on the world I’m thrown,
Whose genuine friendship shall my wants supply?
Those craving wants an untrain’d maid alone,
Both parents dead, beholds with swollen eye!

XXII.

“ Who shall with pleasure lead the tender mind
To choose the good, the evil courses shun;
What real Virtue has in truth design’d
For those who from all vicious habits run?

XXIII.

“ How drear the prospect which around me lies,
What sad ideas wring my troubled soul,
While sovereign Reason the dread conflict flies,
Which should wild Passion’s turbid rage controul!

XXIV. How

XXIV.

“ How sweet, how pleasing, was my early morn,
No fable clouds obscur'd the bright serene ;
Gay, social comforts my young mind adorn,
That pleasures wove to gild the flattering scene.

XXV.

“ How short, how transient was their fullen date !
They fled in wrath from my frail grasp away ;
Stern were the mandates of unfeeling fate,
And joy's faint glimpses as a winter's day.

XXVI.

“ Thou gentle spirit, if from realms on high
Thou now behold'st thy forlorn daughter laid
Beneath this covert, heal her throbbing sigh,
And soothe the anguish of a weeping maid !

XXVII.

“ May no rebukes, from a fell chiding tongue,
Warp my content, make my dependence known ;
No bitter taunts, with livid venoms hung,
Destroy my peace—my dear lov'd father's gone !

XXVIII.

“ What eye but wept, and shed the furrowing tear,
At the sad tale replete with ghastly woe ;
What breast but heav'd, what throes of grief appear,
When sighs and tears in painful sorrow flow !

XXIX.

“ Yes, there’s an eye, an ever-shameless eye,
 That neither wept, nor join’d the general grief;
 A wife, foul ingrate ! heav’d not sorrow’s sigh,
 Her bosom wants not sorrow’s sad relief.

XXX.

“ Can I forget that ever-mournful sight,
 Or blot it out from memory’s woeful page,
 When I beheld thee in that doleful plight,
 All bruise’d and bloated by the water’s rage !

XXXI.

“ Whilst circling Time rolls on its rapid wheel,
 And life’s warm current swells my youthful veins,
 Shall I forget what my young heart did feel,
 When first I saw thy streaming bloody stains !

XXXII.

“ Thrice was the attempt, and thrice I shrinking fail’d,
 And lifeless fell before the awful door ;
 Thrice more I strain’d, ere once my strength prevail’d,
 All pale and weak, to quit the crimson’d floor.

XXXIII.

“ The deep impression, with a harrowing gloom,
 Sunk in my mind ; each vital feeling bled ;
 My peace, my pleasure’s buried in yon tomb,
 And every joy’s with my dear father fled.

XXXIV. Thou

XXXIV.

"Thou genial power of soft refreshing sleep,
Where art thou gone, and with thee my delight!
I leave my pillow o'er my woes to weep,
And wail away the weary gloom of night."

XXXV.

Thus ANNA ended, and her pallid cheek
Dropp'd on her shoulder, with a fainting eye;
Her faltering accents Sorrow's gripe bespeak,
Whilst from her bosom burst Affliction's sigh;

XXXVI.

When thro' the void a glimmering radiance shot,
And faint illum'd the verdant scene around;
Two aerial Beings gleam'd upon the spot,
Where the fair mourner wept along the ground.

XXXVII.

One rous'd fresh anguish in her drooping breast,
For all the Father clearly she could trace;
The other smil'd, in sweet complacence dress'd,
Yet not one feature shew'd the Mother's face.

XXXVIII.

"Why weeps my child?" the tender Father said—
"Why sinking sadly 'neath the load of grief,
Tho' in the grave my mouldering body's laid,
Where life's misfortunes find a sure relief?"

XXXIX.

“ Few were my years upon the mortal stage,—
The only wish that warp’d my feeling mind,
Was but to live to train thy infant age,
That when I dy’d thou might’st not grieve behind.

XL.

“ Dread Fate forbade.”—The gentle Mother spoke,
A smile of pity smooth’d her placid brow,
“ Weep not, my child, at this tremendous stroke,
Tho’ long, long since, death loos’d my bridal vow.

XLI.

“ Dread not pale Want, that ever-ghastly foe,
Dread not keen insult from the scoffing world;
All have their portion of corroding woe,
And deep affliction o’er each head is hurl’d.

XLII.

“ In yon lone shades behold my reverend sire,
Whose silver locks upon his shoulders play;
There see my sisters, still with love aspire
To smooth his passage on life’s chequer’d way.

XLIII.

“ These shall supply a tender mother’s care,
With sweet compassion feed thy early wants;
Whilst he with pleasure hears thy morning prayer
For that support his liberal kindness grants.

XLIV. Then

XLIV.

“ Then cease thy weeping, nor hereafter mourn ;
Again we'll meet near Heaven's seraphic throne ;
But never more can we to thee return,
'Twixt this dread Now and thy life's parting groan.”

XLV.

These words pronounc'd, the pleasing vision fled,
And sable darkness wrapt in gloom the green ;
The gentle mourner left her mossy bed,
And long remember'd the instructive scene.

You will perceive some days have elapsed since the commencement of this letter, during which time I have not heard a syllable relative to Mr. Fennell. Although I was ill-treated by him in the extreme, I must frankly acknowledge, I am very solicitous to know the state of his health, and whether his wounds are in a dangerous state or not. If they should prove mortal, I have entailed upon myself a never-dying sting of wretchedness. Though compelled, I might have retracted; and this conduct, however dishonourable,

E 4 would

would have brought more peace to a reflecting mind.

Sir Robert informed me this morning that Mrs. Brooke, with all the insensibility of an inanimate substance, with all the callous cruelty to which the sex should be a total stranger, hath last night packed up what moveables she could carry, decamped, and left her two innocent babes to the mercy of the wide world. Sir Robert, with a clemency characteristic of him, hath taken them to educate and bring up in a manner suitable to their birth and expectation.

Whilst Sir Robert and I were conversing, he acquainted me with some particular traits in the character of Mrs. Brooke which were not very amiable, and which had for some years rendered Mr. Brooke completely unhappy. During this conversation, the little cherubs slipped out of the room, and missing them, I walked to the Vicarage, supposing they had gone thither.

I found

I found them in the parlour, their hands clasped together, weeping and crying for their mamma. Just as I entered the elder was saying, "O, William, we shall never see papa more—no more—he is dead and buried in the church-yard; but where is mamma?"—"I don't know, William,—mamma is not dead; she put us to bed last night,—"

The maid was endeavouring to comfort them, although her tears flowed as fast as theirs.—"Poor babies! I am afraid you will never see your mamma more!"—"What for, Hannah?" cried the eldest, "I am sure we never offended mamma;" "why shall we see her no more?"

I was truly affected with their innocence and grief; and said, taking them both by the hands, "Come, my dear children, go with me to the Hall—weep no more."—"Mr. Wilton," replied Charles, "will you tell me where papa is? Mamma told me he was gone from home. When will he come back?"—I was at

a loss what to answer to such sweet simplicity; yet said, "My dear Charles, your papa is in heaven; you will meet him there."—"Come then, Mr. Wilton, let us go, I want to see my papa."

We walked to Bertram-Hall. I requested Sir Robert to allow me to assume the charge of my pretty cowslip-gatherer, and I promised to be particularly attentive to his conduct and education. Sir Robert complied. This task I shall be studious to execute with care and punctuality, as the only return I can make to the memory of a worthy man, whose civility I shall long remember, whose unhappy fate I shall ever regret.

I am, &c.

LET:

L E T T E R XLVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR BENFIELD,

I F ever superstition had any influence upon my mind, it is at this present moment; for I begin to suspect that the malice of my father's imprecation is now beginning to pursue me. Whether this idea may proceed from the solemn stillness of the gloomy confines of a prison, or that it is a fatality entailed upon the children of disobedience, I am somewhat at present incapacitated to determine. I should hope the impression results solely from the horror of these damp dreary walls, to which I am a stranger, and the terror of my accusation. These stones are be-daubed with a fallow green, the produce of filth and the silent working hand of

Time. These crystal drops, which glitter all around me, indicate a chilly moisture, arising from a stagnant and putrid air.

Murder, Benfield, has a horrid sound ; but I hope I am guiltless from the infernal charge, though a close prisoner in a dreary dungeon in Morpeth-gaol. Of what continuance my confinement will be, the event of a little time will determine.

I had not so perfect a knowledge of the inveterate malice and unrelenting revenge of my spiteful rival, as Olivia. Her fears were presaging ; and what she presaged, Mr. Fennell's vengeance is now attempting to perpetrate. Though perfectly acquiescent to the just decisions of the laws of my country, I will not tamely submit myself to be kept a prisoner in a dungeon on a supposititious accusation, however powerful he may be in the county, however authoritative his connections. Report has not even published his demise, which must inevitably have happened,

happened, had it been a reality. The contrivance of malice will not long escape detection.

Under a surmise that Mr. Longford had departed from Bertram-Hall, I walked thither in the forenoon, and, prevailing upon my dear Olivia to favour me with a walk in the park, we sat down upon the verdant turf beneath the shade of the branching sycamore. "I am surprised, Mr. Wilton," said Olivia, "you have not heard from Mr. Benfield; he is certainly worse, or hath some unfavourable intelligence to communicate relative to your sister, which he wishes to conceal from you at present, lest the information might irritate your sensibility, and protract the perfect restoration of your health."—"I hope not, my dear; I rather conclude, he hath nothing satisfactory concerning my sister to acquaint me with, or I am confident I should before this have received the information. From a thorough knowledge of the activity of Mr. Benfield's

“ Benfield’s mind, I dare aver he is not
“ at present idle, but hath attempted many
“ a deep-laid scheme for the recovery of
“ his lost mistress.”—“ Indeed, Mr. Wil-
“ ton, I am very anxious to hear of the
“ untoward destiny of my suffering sister.”
—“ Your suffering sister, my angel !”—
“ O, Sir, pardon the expression ! it was
“ a slip of inconsideration.”—“ No par-
“ don, Olivia ; she is—she shall be your
“ sister. But when, O when will that
“ happy day arrive, when this affinity
“ shall take place ?”—“ Sir Robert and
“ Lady Bertram, with their wonted be-
“ nevolence towards me, have left this
“ appointment to my own determination.
“ Sir Robert hath informed me of every
“ particular which passed betwixt you
“ and him at your last interview.
“ His goodness to me was ever tender,
“ humane, and sympathetic ; his bounty
“ hath far exceeded my expectation.”—
“ Since, my Olivia, you are in this case
“ left to your own determination, would
“ you

“ you wish to protract my misery ? for
“ miserable I must incessantly be, until I
“ am united to you by the sacred bonds of
“ God and man.”— ‘ No, Wilton, I have
“ not the least distant wish to protract your
“ misery ; I have not a hope beyond the
“ consummation of your happiness. But
“ can you, my Wilton, be happy under
“ the fatality of a father’s curse, when
“ a mother, amiable for her virtues, and
“ respectable for her sufferings ; when a
“ sister, a beloved sister, is pining be-
“ neath the pangs of disappointment, and
“ languishing under the gloomy horrors
“ of a close confinement ; yourself not
“ recovered from your wounds, and your
“ opponent in a state of absolute uncer-
“ tainty as to life or death ; under all these
“ awful considerations, can you, my Wil-
“ ton, be happy ?”—This recapitulation of
true but terrific incidents aroused in
a moment every feeling of my soul.—I
started from my grassy seat, and with a look
of horror—as Olivia afterwards told me—

ex-

expressive of every internal anguish, said,
“ O Olivia, you have harrowed up my
“ very soul by an enumeration of pressing
“ evils, which were dormant, and, from
“ the predominancy of my ardent love
“ for you, almost forgotten. Wretch that
“ I am, whither shall I fly ! Where shall
“ I hide myself from the searching eye of
“ an all-seeing God, whose vengeance pur-
“ sues me as a disobedient outcast—hated,
“ cursed by my father—my mother, by
“ my ingratitude, involved in the bitterest
“ misery !”—Raising my hands and eyes to
heaven, in the anguish of my heart I uttered,
“ Merciful Heaven ! forgive and pardon an
“ undutiful son, who, from a wish to pursue
“ the path of rectitude, may have erred, and
“ by his error hath fatally, though not in-
“ tentionally, plunged the innocence of
“ others in the guilt of his own crimes !”—
—“ Wilton, Wilton !”—I started from my
reverie, when Olivia, with a look of
sweetness and complacency, was resting
her head upon my shoulder.—My horror
was dispersed in a moment love, all-
powerful,

powerful, revived, and in a fit of ecstasy I clasped my charming Olivia to my panting bosom. "Now, Olivia, I am happy."—"O, Wilton, forgive my officiousness; I meant not to wring your feelings by any imputation of ingratitude."—"You have not offended me, ask not forgiveness."—"Yes, I aroused ideas which were grating and violent. Yet, believe me, my happiness is involved in your's."—So saying, she covered her blushes in my bosom.—Silence ensued—Benfield, the scene was tender—to attempt a description of my own feelings, and I believe they were reciprocal, would be inconsiderate, would be absurd.

After a certain pause, this still, pleasing rapture began to subside, and, looking around, I espied two men coming towards us. We walked forwards.—They came to us, when one of them said, "Pray, Sir, is your name Wilton?" I answered in the affirmative. He instantly clapped his hand upon my shoulder, and said, "I ar-
"rest

“rest you in the King’s name; you are
 “my prisoner.”—“Inform me for what
 “crime I am arrested.”—“For mur-
 “der, Sir! You are arrested for the
 “wilful murder of John Fennell, Esq; as
 “worthy a gentleman as any in the
 “county.”—“Pray, Mr. Constable, let
 “me see the instrument by which you are
 “authorized to attach me your pri-
 “soner.”—“Come, Sir, come along,”
 said the fellow, “you shall see my autho-
 “rity, when you come before his honour
 “the Justice, Sir Andrew Johnson, the
 “uncle of Mr. Fennell.”—“Excuse me,
 “Mr. Constable, without you immedi-
 “ately produce your warrant, I will not
 “obey your authority.”—“Will you
 “not? then you must be forced to obey!”
 —At the same instant, they both seized
 me by the collar.—Olivia, sweet creature,
 who all the while had been in the most
 violent tremor, screamed out, and fainted
 in my arms. I civilly requested them to
 stand aloof, until the lady was reco-
 vered,

vered, and I would attend them without reluctance. "No, no, Sir, the lady is only
"in a fainting fit; she will come to herself presently. We will never leave
"hold until we have you before Sir Andrew."

My attention was wholly employed over the dear object of all my hopes, while the unfeeling savages beheld her agony without the least emotion.—She looked up; when seeing them holding me, she relapsed into her former insensibility. I adjured them to keep at a little distance, for I would not make the least attempt to leave them. They were callous to all my adjurations; but fortunately Sir Robert and Lady Bertram coming into the park, and perceiving my embarrassed situation, the former came running towards us, and enquired with much vehemence what was the matter? I answered, "I am arrested for the murder
"of Mr. Fennell."—"Where is your
"warrant, Constable?" said Sir Robert.

"I have

—“ I have demanded it, Sir, but they
“ refuse to produce it.”—“ Refuse to pro-
“ duce it !” replied Sir Robert ; “ villains,
“ stand off ;” at the same time knocking
one of them down with the thick end of
his cane.—“ Where is your warrant ?” to
the other.—“ My partner has it in his
“ pocket, Sir.”—Olivia walked off, at
my earnest desire, faint and trembling,
hanging upon the arm of Lady Bertram.

The doughty Constable began to rise,
and while he was sitting on his breech,
began to search his pockets for the warrant ;
which as soon as he found, he jumped up
with alacrity, and said, “ There, Sir, there
“ it is.” Sir Robert took it, and, having
examined it, said, “ Mr. Wilton, it is le-
“ gal, you must obey.”—“ I never meant
“ to resist, Sir Robert.”—“ I will accom-
“ pany you, Mr. Wilton, to Sir Andrew
“ Johnson’s.”

The carriage was ready in a few
minutes, and to accommodate Mr. Con-
stable, he was permitted to mount be-
hind.

hind. We had not more than seven or eight miles to ride, before we arrived at the end of our journey. Being announced to Sir Andrew, we were ordered to attend him. As soon as he beheld Sir Robert, I perceived his countenance to change, and his authority sat very awkward upon him.—“I suppose, Sir Robert, this is the gentleman who has murdered my nephew?”—“I am sorry, Sir Andrew, you should give it so harsh a name: Mr. Wilton was challenged by your nephew, and if, in defence of his honour, he was victorious, it is not just to brand him with so opprobrious an accusation.”—“No matter, no matter, Sir Robert, who gave the challenge, murder is committed, and I must commit the murderer to Morpeth-gaol.”—“Sir Andrew,” said I, “since I am thus unfortunate, I shall calmly await the equitable decision of the law; but pray, when did your nephew die?”—The interrogation startled

startled him, and he made no answer. He sat down at a table, where there were pens, paper, and ink, and began to write. When he arose, he said, "Here, Con-
" stable, here is the gentleman's com-
" mitment; take especial care that he be
" lodged a close prisoner."—"Yes, your
" honour Sir Andrew."—"Sir, what
" day did Mr. Fennell die?"—"Ah!"
shaking his head—"I have lost the heir
" to my estate, Sir Robert; as worthy a
" gentleman as any between Trent and
" Tweed. Four thousand pounds a-year
" would have made any man loth to die,
" and leave all behind him. Sir Robert, I
" have been these twenty-nine years three
" quarters and thirteen days in the com-
" mission, and I never before committed
" a man for murder. Thus to be com-
" pelled to prosecute the murderer of my
" nephew and heir, is not a little hard."
—"Pray, Sir Andrew, when do you
" purpose to inter Mr. Fennell?"—
Here, Sir Andrew, ringing the bell, cried,
"Ralph,

“Ralph, bring a bottle of wine, the gentlemen have had a long journey. I have better wine, Sir, than any you will get in gaol.”

The bottle of wine was brought in ; but all our interrogatories relative to the death of Mr. Fennell were evaded, or intentionally not heard ; which caused me shrewdly to suspect the whole of the transaction to be an imposture. This had not escaped the penetration of Sir Robert, who became impatient to be gone, and taking leave of Sir Andrew, the Constable, as before, was posted behind the carriage.

Sir Robert observed, as we were driving along, that this profound Justice was evasive and equivocating ; but he would drive to Mr. Fennell's, as probably some certainty might be collected from such an unexpected visit. It was only two miles from our direct road. The Constable remonstrated. Sir Robert answered, “ he would be surety for the prisoner.” When
the

the carriage stopped at the gate, Sir Robert alighted, and enquired for Mr. Fennell. The servant answered, he was dead. He perceived much bustle, and that all the servants whom he saw avoided his presence. "This mysterious conduct," he observed, "was not easily to be developed "at present;" and he advised me to a tacit acquiescence, as a little time would unravel this intricate business. We drove directly forward for Morpeth, where I was delivered into the custody of the gaoler, who immediately confined me in durance.

Thus, Benfield, you know every particular of this very extraordinary transaction; how it will terminate is beyond my capacity to prognosticate.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR.
WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

THE tide in your affairs has taken a very unfortunate turn. The death of Mr. Fennell, should it prove true, will scarcely convict you on an equitable interpretation of the law : should it be all a contrivance fabricated for some sinister purpose, I think it might easily be discovered ; and then an action for false imprisonment will teach his relations, in future, to curtail their authority.

Power and riches are frequently the instruments of tyranny, when possessed by the ignorant and ambitious. They are proud to be arrayed in authority, to strut

in despotism, and usher forth their magisterial commands to humble slaves and cringing vassals who dare not disobey. Yet a stretch of power diametrically opposite to the established laws of our country, may be of the most fatal tendency; and if I may advise, should it prove as Sir Robert and you seem to suspect, I make you a free and unlimited proffer of my estate and fortune, to right yourself, and exact that justice which power and authority seem to deny.

Were I in your predicament, I would not tacitly allow one hour to elapse without an attempt to investigate what your enemies are so desirous to conceal. You owe it to your family, to your character; you owe it to posterity. Let no exertion be wanting, let not fear be predominant, and perseverance will facilitate, will overturn every difficulty. But to whom am I writing! To one who will smile at my passion, and view my impetuosity with all the apathy of a Stoic. Wilton, forgive
my

my violence ; for when I presume to advise, you know it results from the warmth of a friendship sincere and uncontaminated.

I have done an action which in all probability you will not approve. I have conveyed your last letter to your venerable mother ; for I deemed it indispensably requisite that your family should be apprized of your present critical situation. To be accused and confined, may give you immediate pain ; but should interest or interposition be finally necessary, the sooner preparation is made, it will certainly be the more prevalent.

The kind enquiry of Olivia after my Antoner gives me pleasure. Had I received any intelligence that was satisfactory, I should immediately have communicated it to you ; but all my enquiries have been fruitless, and not the least consolatory hint is to be obtained concerning the place of her temporary confinement.

Her maid Jenny, two days after she took up her residence with me, made me a proposal, with which I coincided. Though somewhat chimerical, I thought it might probably be productive of some information, whence some scheme or project might originate, by which she might be liberated, and again restored to my arms. Impressed with the idea that Antonet was in London, amongst some of her relations, she proposed to go thither, as, from her long servitude in the Wilton family, she was perfectly acquainted with them all. If she could only discover where she was, she could be very instrumental in assisting her in a precipitate elopement, by which she might escape the watchfulness of her guards.

There seemed to me to be some probability in the scheme, and where there is the least glimpse of success a lover seldom desponds. I have had two letters from her since her arrival in the metropolis, in which she acquaints me, she has been
hitherto

hitherto unsuccessful, although she has visited every family whom she could recollect to be in any degree of affinity with your's. I am in hourly expectation of her return, and if she brings me no intelligence, my hopes for the present must vanish, and I shall become a victim to the corroding tooth of fell despair.

My wound is in a healing condition, so that with some pain and more difficulty I am able again to handle my pen; but if Jenny prove unsuccessful in her embassy, and arrive to-day, I may probably be in Morpeth before you receive this epistle, as I am determined not only to visit, but liberate, if possible, my friend from the dreary cells of a noisome prison. If I come not in a day or two after the receipt of this, you may conclude I have received information which requires my immediate attendance.

I am, &c.

F 3

P. S. The

P. S. The inclosed from Mr. Beman will convince you, that Lord Wilton has not relinquished his intentions relative to the sale of his estate, although he meets with more opposition than he expected from the established law of the land.

FROM MR. BEMAN TO MR. BENFIELD.

SIR,

CONCEIVING myself bound by my promise to acquaint you with every particular incident relative to cutting off the entail of the Wilton estate, I now inform you I have had another visit from the Earl, at my chambers. He told me he had written to his son requiring his consent, for which he was to receive the gratuity of ten thousand pounds, on an absolute resignation of all claim to the estate; but that he had received an answer containing a peremptory refusal, and when discouraging of which he grew impatient and almost ungovernable in his temper. He said,

said, he was confident of the practicability of his project; and though some small legal difficulty might intervene, a little ingenuity and some consideration might easily remove it, for which I should receive a liberal compensation of one thousand pounds. I answered, "The compensation, my Lord, is liberal indeed, but then, it is the reward of villainy, which I never yet have practised, even when Poverty was my companion, and Want my domestic. I am now independent, and will never fully the reputation I have acquired by being guilty of so base an action." He looked sternly at me, muttering, "Independent!—Reputation!—and a Lawyer!"—Without deigning a reply, he retired.

What I would not perform, I may be a little industrious to prevent.

I am, &c.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MISS
OLIVIA BERTRAM.

MY DEAR OLIVIA,

A SEPARATION from the pleasure of your company is really a greater punishment than my confinement. The latter I could patiently endure, supported by the pleasing hope of a speedy termination, when my innocence should be vindicated and my honour justified from the least stain or aspersion; but to be separated from my Olivia is painful indeed, and infixes within my breast a gnawing sting, which corrodes with anguish, and embitters every moment of my existence with anxiety, solicitude, and care. Grating reflection! to have you torn from my
arms

arms by the ruffian grasp of partial justice in that happy hour when your ingenuous confession of a mutual affection confirmed my aspiring hopes and established my pride, a pride resulting from this distinguished preference, on a foundation I vainly deemed permanent and lasting.

O Olivia, Olivia, how transient are our pleasures, how fleeting all our hopes ! To be blessed with your love, to be honoured with your affection, was my sole, my chiefest desire in my passage through this vale of woe. I received this blessing, I was distinguished with this honour, yet by a perverse fatality in my destiny, I am severely doomed to all the pungent horrors of an uncertain separation. Cruel man ! will thy revenge—this dark revenge, pursue me beyond the grave ? Had thy infernal malice attacked me before I was a lover—before I was beloved—thy vengeance had appeared to me trivial and despicable. But now, O now, thou triumphest in my punishment, and har-

rowest up my soul with the keenest pang of misery.—But wretched as I am, why should I complain? Have I forgot your confessed partiality? No, never shall that favour be obliterated from my mind, whilst this pulse beats, or memory retains its power. This constitutes my happiness:—under this idea I will—I must be happy.

I was a stranger until now, Olivia, to the violence of my passion. Whilst I had free access to your presence it was calm, placid, and unruffled, like the smooth gentle surface of the glassy stream not rippled by the curling breeze; but now it is impetuous and ungovernable, like the furious, dashing surge, when fomented by the raging tempest, and disturbed by the howling storm. Cruel alternative! Yet I will be silent; conscious that there is a tide in the fortune of every human creature that recoils by opposition, and frequently ruins by negligence; but which if indulged and suffered with resignation, although

although its primal appearances be unfavourable and threatening, yet it operates by methods secret and unthought of, that finally terminate in peace and aggrandizement. This consideration, when maturely weighed, was sufficient to satisfy my utmost scrupulosity, and blunt the keenest edge of my sensibility; but when I reflect, that from my unhappy fate one pang of wretchedness may assail your bosom, Olivia! the reflection is intolerable—I am lost in the tormenting gulph of anguish.—Let me conjure you, by our reciprocal affection—by that chaste passion which agitates our bosoms, to forget if possible, to bury in oblivion every moment of my existence which I am compelled to pass in this loathsome confinement—rendered doubly loathsome, since separation from you is the baneful consequence.

What I am at present advising you to perform, probably my unmanly complaints may render more irksome and af-

fictive, from the sole supposition that I am not only unhappy, but miserable. Yet, Olivia, believe me, the horrors of a dungeon are not insufferable, and a little patience may mitigate their dreariest gloom; but when I say I feel, I feel not for myself:—when my bosom swells with sorrow, it swells for my Olivia:—if perchance the tear of recollection steals adown my cheek, I wipe it not away, it is the sweet tribute of gratitude due to your love.—Yet think not of me—let me for a season be totally lost to your remembrance, till the sunshine of joy gleam again upon our hopes.

I acknowledge that I passed last night rather uncomfortably: sleep would have been a welcome visitant, but it fled from my waking eyes, and, though often invoked, never deigned to shed its sombrous dew upon my heavy lids. This little cold truss of straw is neither a warm nor an eligible bed; and though I frequently stretched my weary limbs upon it, to forget for a while the sorrow which racks my
mind,

mind, yet the chilling moisture and inclement damps of a cold clay floor so benumbed my restless frame, as wholly to prevent me from tasting of that kind temporary destroyer of human woes, balmy sleep. Whenever a gentle slumber overspread and seemed to lull my tired senses into a sweet repose, I was suddenly disturbed by the shrill clanking of chains, and the more horrid sounds of the most dreadful oaths and prophane imprecations, enough to make cursed wickedness more wicked.

“Heaven, all merciful and good!” cried I, “look with an eye of pity on
 “these poor wretches, who, totally lost to
 “a sense of their own calamities, form a
 “combination in their crimes, and struggle
 “for pre-eminence in villainy. Instead
 “of a lively poignant sorrow for a
 “life of shameless criminality, instead of
 “a deep repentance for unheard-of scenes
 “of theft and cruelty, they are boasting
 “of their proficiency in evil, and endeavouring

“vouring to render more callous those
 “feelings which never felt for the sins of
 “mortality.”

In this mad assemblage of riot and uproar, my only resource, and certainly it was a comfortable one, was to address myself to the protection of a good Providence, to shed his benignant influence into the hearts of those poor wretches, that they might, in time, see into the error of their ways, repent, and live.

Thus was the first night of my imprisonment spent—the former part of it, under all the tormenting agonies of love—the latter part, in prayer for the alleviation of the wretched, the miserable, and the vile.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER L.

FROM MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM TO THE
HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

THE perusal of your letter hath afflicted me—hath wrung my soul with agony, and instilled the pang of misery where it will not easily be eradicated. Damp walls and a truss of straw are sorry companions for a mind ill at ease—will never soothe that affliction which originates from innocence accused, nor assuage that pain engendered from oppressed virtue. O Wilton, were I present, it should be my constant endeavour to dispel the gloom of your darkened cell, to soften your bed of straw, and infuse sweet hope into your afflicted mind. You should rest your head upon my bosom, there repose
your

your sorrows, and sleep away the weary hours of wretchedness and grief. I would carefully guard thy slumbers, watch thee through the still silence of the night, and when the horrid clangor of chains, or the more horrid sound of wickedness, was likely to disturb thy rest, I would attempt to appease the offensive clamour, and bid the offenders be at peace. When weary and fatigued, I would stretch myself by thee on the cold straw, fearless of the damps of the dungeon, recommend myself to the protection of my Creator, and sleep by thy side.

You conjure me to endeavour to assume a temporary forgetfulness, and erase from my remembrance your present affliction. No Wilton, I should then prove myself unworthy of that affection, unworthy of that love, for which you are now a prisoner. Was it not unkind to make the proposal? or, Did you conclude me so irresolute and void of fortitude as to be unable to support the incumbent pressure of misfortune?

tune? You know a participation of sorrow is a certain alleviation; then who is so proper to participate of it as she who is the sole instrument in accumulating it? This proposal is not a little unkind, or you deem me an unworthy companion in your afflictions; not afflicted alone, I assure you, since these trembling fingers can scarcely grasp the pen. My pillow, Wilton, has not been dry since our separation, and this is the first time I have raised my aching head from it. But my gratitude—nay, something more tender, my love impelled me to answer your letter, and inform you, I am rather apprehensive of some disorder, and my fears are seconded by those of Lady Bertram. Whatever I may suffer, whatever destiny awaits me, I could bear it with patience and resignation, were I but assured of your liberation. Yet, why should I despair? I am confident of your innocence, and though the God of our fathers may permit virtue to suffer for a season, yet, in
vindication

vindication of his Providence, he will not finally allow the votaries of evil to triumph.

It is one of the chief duties of Christianity to inculcate patience under all our earthly trials ; and herein consists all the most shining characteristics of virtue. To droop beneath a temptation, is a certain indication of a want of fortitude ; for virtue is only eminently distinguishable, when set in opposition to the fascinating lures of vice.

To pass through life smooth and unruffled, with the passions lulled into indolence and inactivity, is little superior to a state of inanimation ; but when a man is beset with trouble, oppressed with calamity, and surrounded with misfortune, by the machinations of evil-doers ; and when by a virtuous exertion and strenuous efforts he attempts to repel every attack, and manfully bear up against the impending pressure ; it would be arraigning the justice of our Omniscient Creator
to

to suppose, that such struggles of virtue would not be victorious. He hath promised in his Eternal Word never to forsake the righteous; and though he permits them, for a trial of their constancy, to feel the corrective rod of adversity, he will at length exalt his suffering servants to a pre-eminence even in this mortal state, that may be desired, nay envied, but is never attainable by the adherents of vice.

This everlasting truth, Wilton, duly impressed upon our minds, will empower us to bear every stroke of adversity with constancy, with resignation. Let us recollect that the Great Pattern of Humility, the Chief Example of all Innocence, was persecuted, despised, and treated with ignominy. Let his patience be our precedent, let his example be our instruction. Thus armed with a faint imitation of our Christian Master, every misfortune, every evil that can assail us in our passage through this scene of tears, will be deemed

deemed trivial in comparison of our reward hereafter.

I am not moralizing, Wilton; I am delivering those eternal truths which a studious perusal of Revelation hath inculcated, and which are peculiarly congenial to the present disposition of my mind. I am conscious of increasing weakness; and the many pauses I am necessitated to make, convince me of the rapid progress of some disorder which is undermining my mortal frame. I have long been the Child of Misfortune—you have heard me express it—though not a victim to despair; but this last concussion hath almost overpowered me. I am happy however, that upon the maturest reflection I little to reproach myself with; yet as absolute perfection is not the lot of frail humanity, I may have many errors, many crimes, of which I am not at present sensible.

Youth, Wilton, hath many desires, and a short taste of life only creates a
desire

desire for more. Few are possessed of that self-denial, wholly to divest themselves of this desire; for life hath many snares, which are entangling even to the wisest of the sons of men. Once I was indifferent—yes, Wilton, once I was indifferent to every surrounding pleasure—I knew not the weakness of my own heart; and why life is become so precious, you will not be at a loss to divine.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO
MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

SINCE the time hath elapsed in which you promised to be at Morpeth, and have not arrived, I conclude some incident of importance hath detained you, in which my dear sister Antonet is connected. Were I the only unhappy sufferer in our family, I could bear it without much regret, as I am punished for a certain degree of delinquency. Every crime ought to have a proportionate penalty annexed; and though I am perfectly resigned under the punishment of my own dereliction, I have some compunction lest I should have been indirectly instrumental in accumulating sorrow upon the undeserving head
of

of my amiable mother. This consideration engenders remorse, embitters my present moments, and makes my cogitations gloomy and disgustful.

However I may be the unhappy tho' involuntary instrument of entailing misery upon others, whose friendship I esteem, and whose confidence I revere, I am not endowed with that insensibility as to perceive them involved in wretchedness from their generous attachment, and not participate of their affliction, by consolatory endearments and an affectionate condolence. From this sympathetic source I may date my present misery; for the object of all my hopes, the consummation of all my temporal wishes, is at this moment the point of becoming the victim of a cruel disease. Tormenting thought! O, Benfield, Olivia is sinking beneath the terrific advances of a destructive fever. Her constitution is too delicate for the rudeness of the shocks which lately it was destined to undergo. In this extremity of wretchedness,

wretchedness, what an irreparable loss have I suffered by the premature death of the good Mr. Brooke! How would he have consoled me! how should I have profited by his admonitions!—Death, terrific name! cease thy devastation—let Olivia survive, though I fall thy victim! If she be thy destined prey, and must now pay the great debt of nature, what is there worthy in life for my continuance in it!—Rash exclamation!—Benevolent Creator, forgive and pardon the presumption of an inconsiderate mortal—who is ready to condemn what he does not understand, to arraign what is far above his comprehension.

Sir Robert has not left my cell above an hour—his friendship is permanent and solid—his officiousness in the detection of imposture, if there be any in this circumstance, unceasing.

Yesterday he waited upon Sir Andrew Johnson, the uncle of Mr. Fennell, and told him, that he had well-grounded suspicions

suspensions for concluding, that authority, and not justice, had been the chief cause of my confinement. "But, Sir Andrew, reflect
" upon what you have done; consider in
" time of the impolicy of an action which
" may be productive of future litigation;
" for should the imprisonment be false,
" ten thousand pounds will not buy your acquittal."—Sir Andrew seemed very much confused, and answered with hesitation,
" If I have stretched the just authority of
" law, it was not intentionally; for I
" assure you, I have not been at Fennell-Hall since I received the doleful information of my nephew's death. I was
" under a solemn promise to himself, should he die, to prosecute his murderer, which promise, Sir Robert, I
" conceive myself bound to execute."—
" A promise, Sir Andrew, to a dying man
" is certainly binding; but for your own
" safety and the dispersion of my suspicions, will you favour me with your
" company to Fennell-Hall, where ocu-

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“lar demonstration will be decisive and
“satisfactory.”—“Oh, Sir Robert, you
“impose a hard task! To behold the
“pale face of my deceased nephew will
“bedew my aged cheeks with sorrow.
“But since your scruples ought to be dis-
“sipated, I will willingly accompany
“you.”

Sir Robert said, when they arrived
at Fennell-Hall, they were received and
ushered in by a servant in deep mourn-
ing. A solemn silence reigned through-
out the mansion, for, during their stay,
they saw not another soul but the servant
who attended them. “Where,” said Sir
Andrew, “lie the remains of my dear
“nephew?” They were immediately con-
ducted into a spacious apartment, where
there was a coffin covered with a large
velvet pall. “There, there, Sir Robert,
“lies the corpse of one of the best of
“men! the hope of his family, the
“heir of my estate! Had you only con-
“sented to have given him your daughter,
“you

“you would have made an old man hap-
 “py, and him, by the addition of your
 “large estate, one of the richest and
 “wealthiest gentlemen in the county of
 “Northumberland. Oh, oh, Sir Ro-
 “bert, what evils are come upon me in
 “my old age! My gray hairs will sink
 “in sorrow to the grave.”—“Be not in-
 “consolable, Sir Andrew. This misfor-
 “tune, grievous indeed, when it deprives
 “a worthy family of its only hope and heir,
 “is not intolerable, and ought to be borne
 “with a due resignation, with an humble
 “submission to the common accidents of
 “life. Besides it ought to be remem-
 “bered, that your nephew was the ag-
 “gressor; wilfully compelled Mr. Wilton
 “to a defence of his honour; and since
 “it was his unfortunate lot to fall, he fell
 “by the man whose life he fought.”—
 “Oh, Sir Robert, do not condemn the
 “deceased. Could that lifeless corpse rise
 “up and speak, it would say, he never
 “wronged or did an injury to a fellow-
 “creature.

“creature. He was all gentleness and innocence, and would have made a kind husband.”

Sir Andrew was very talkative in his grief, and ample in his praises of the deceased. —Sir Robert’s doubts were removed, and he took his leave, expressing his sorrow for such an unfortunate mischance.

I mentioned in the former part of my letter, that my dear Olivia was dangerously ill—the inclosed are a few lines which I sent to her, on the report I received from my gaoler, that Mr. Fennell was dead; the perusal of which, Sir Robert says, had so sudden an effect upon her health and spirits, that in the space of a few minutes she became feverish, with strong symptoms of delirium. The fever increased, and when Sir Robert left Bertram-Hall she was pronounced by her physician to be in the utmost danger.

Poor Olivia! why in such haste! Should thy chaste soul break loose from its earthly precincts, I would instantly solicit the
bloody

Bloody hand of the executioner to set my ardent spirit free, to meet and ask thine forgiveness in the pure regions of the air, before it entered into the mansions of everlasting bliss and immortality.

O Benfield, pity me, pity me! I am wretched beyond redemption—sunk into the lowest gulph of misery, without a possibility of an escape!—What is philosophy! It is a phantom!—What are the delusive theories, with the learning and fabrication of which we have so often delighted ourselves, and supposed them impregnable to the gloom of grief, the sting of misery, and the pang of wretchedness! They are mere gilded bubbles, that burst with the passing breeze. I have only one resource, which alone is all-sufficient.—This is my religion—a pure confidence in the doctrines of Revelation.—Here “the weary may be at rest, and the wicked “cease from troubling.” Here is my hope—here is the anchor of my drooping soul.

I am, &c.

TO MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM,

MY DEAR OLIVIA,

THE die is cast—Mr. Fennell is dead, and I am already arraigned at the dreadful tribunal of my own conscience. This internal monitor warns me of my approaching fate on earth, and points out incessantly the horrors of an Hereafter. I need no other judge—I am already self-condemned, and feel not a wish for existence, but what originates from yourself. I have been, though involuntarily, the unhappy instrument of causing you much grief. Forget, forgive me;—and if in aftertimes recollection should excite a tear, suppress it not; it is a grateful tribute to the memory of a man who once dearly loved you.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LH.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR.
BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

BY the perusal of my last you would perceive I was in an absolute state of despondency. This horror arose in my mind, not from any abject fear of a premature death, but solely from the reflection of being the reputed murderer of a gentleman, whose violence would have deprived me of that life which I enjoyed by a tenure not at my own disposal. This consideration, that I only acted in my own defence, is no palliative for the wilful transgression of the positive commands of my Maker, and the established laws of my country. I was the person

G 4 chal-

challenged; but then it was totally optional, whether or not I accepted of this challenge; therefore, my spontaneous acceptance renders me as culpable in the scale of impartial, distributive justice, as him with whom the challenge originated. Had I been violently assaulted, and in the defence of my own personal safety deprived a fellow-creature of his existence, rather than suffer him tamely to rob me of mine, I should in the eyes of dispassionate reason have been deemed innocent and guiltless. Unfortunately this was not my case. I had the power of denial, I had the power of retraction; but instead of using either, I rushed inconsiderately and irreligiously into an act of fury, and wantonly despoiled the image of my Maker. Herein rests my self-condemnation; and when arraigned by the laws of my Creator, of my country, and by the unprejudiced decisions of my own conscience, what shall I plead for an acquittance! Custom, that sovereign tyrant,

is a weak, partial, sophisticated advocate ; incapable of demonstrating wrong to be right ; vice to be virtue ; murder to be an act of honour. Delusive, empty name ! Man adopts thee only as a specious pleader to varnish over the irregularity of his conduct.

Whilst I was amusing myself with this rational train of thinking, and contemplating the folly of mankind, who attempt to gild the greatest criminal enormity which can possibly be committed with the plausible epithet of Honour, the gaoler entered, and told me, a lady was attending to speak to me. “A lady !”—“Yes, Sir.”—I suspected it to be Lady Bertram—“Desire her to walk in.”

The few rays of light which faintly glimmered through the iron grate, were not sufficient for me to write by ; I was therefore accommodated with a candle, which stood upon a little fir table.—Here was I sitting, with my elbow resting upon the table, my head upon my hand,

when the lady entered.—I arose to receive her—she flew into my arms, exclaiming, “Alas, my son!”—Merciful God! Benfield, it was my venerable mother.—From the surrounding darkness I was not able to observe the violent agitations of maternal sensibility, which was certainly a relief to me.—I held her in my arms—her aged cheek was laid upon my bosom, which I plentifully bedewed with the tears of true filial affection. She continued insensible and inanimate.—The gaoler perceiving our affliction, came forward and said, “If it be agreeable to you, Sir, to walk above, my parlour is at the service of the lady and you.”—“Thanks, good man.”—His wife attended, and by her assistance my dear mother was conveyed into the open air, whose cooling freshness recalled her flitting spirit. As soon as she beheld me, again she flew into my arms, and clung around my neck:—her agony was relieved by a flood of tears; and so mutual was
our

our affliction, that the gaoler and his wife, though mere spectators, and daily accustomed to behold the depths of misery, wept at the tender scene.

After a pause of some minutes, she raised her weeping eyes, looked upon me with love, with affection, at the same time pressing me to her panting bosom.— Her embrace roused every feeling of my soul; duty, gratitude, and filial tenderness operated so forcibly in my mind, that had not my tears given a vent to the workings of my sorrow, I must have sunk beneath the violence of the unequal conflict.

“ Henry, my son, I came to administer consolation, not to afflict your
“ wounded soul.”—“ Alas, Madam, how
“ shall I repay this last act of affection?
“ From my cradle I have experienced
“ your tenderness; in my riper years I
“ have pierced you through with many
“ sorrows. But forgive your unfortunate
“ son! I have been the unwilling cause of

“many a miserable hour to the best of
“parents.”—“Ask not my forgiveness,
“Henry, I came not to reproach you—I
“came to lighten the gloom of your
“confinement by my personal attend-
“ance, to minister to your wants, and
“soothe, if possible, the corroding pang
“of woe.”—“O, my parent! attend
“upon me, a poor, forlorn, degenerate
“outcast! The fullen gloom of a dun-
“geon, the chill damp moisture of a
“darkened cell, the horrid clangor of
“trailing chains, are sorry and unmeet
“companions for your tenderness and
“delicacy.”—“Henry, name them not
“—such was my determined purpose
“when I left Wilton-Park, and think not
“by a partial representation of the hor-
“rors of a gaol to scare me from my
“intention. I will attend upon thee.”
—“Can you, O can you think to stretch
“yourself upon a cold truss of straw, and
“sigh away the terrors of the midnight
“hours—watch the pale rays of the
“morning

"morning glimmering through the iron
 "grates, and welcome the glad approach
 "of day, after a restless sleepless night!"
 —"A cold truss of straw! Alas, my child,
 "I hope that is not thy nightly bed!"—
 "Too true, indeed."—"Hard has been thy
 "lot; but if interest or wealth can pro-
 "cure better accommodations, they shall
 "be provided this day."—"Pray, Ma-
 "dam, is my honoured father still in-
 "flexible? Does he refuse to see a peni-
 "tent son under such circumstances of
 "sorrow?"—"He is not apprized, Hen-
 "ry, of your misfortune. Under the
 "idea of your being sick of a fever,
 "I obtained his permission to visit you."
 —"Will nothing appease his wrath?
 "Will nothing atone for one act of dis-
 "obedience? Alas, what am I saying?
 "or why should I complain? My life is
 "not in my own possession, my time
 "may be shorter than at present I ima-
 "gine!"—"Henry, Henry, these gloomy
 "observations should be combated with
 "re-

“ resolution, and vanquished with a be-
 “ coming patience. Let us not sink be-
 “ neath the severest trials, or despond,
 “ whilst there is hope. You were not the
 “ aggressor, and the laws of your country
 “ will benevolently allow every indul-
 “ gence even to the perpetrator of such
 “ a crime, since honourable necessity com-
 “ pelled him to the commission.”—“ My
 “ kind directress, through every stage of
 “ time I have deliberately weighed every
 “ argument which partiality can adduce
 “ on this head”—Sir Robert Bertram
 entered. I introduced my venerable
 parent to him. Their meeting and con-
 gratulations were tender and affectionate.
 I observed Sir Robert was booted. He
 frankly told me, he had again waited up-
 on Sir Andrew Johnson, upon a very im-
 portant subject, and for which he a thou-
 sand times begged my pardon for having
 before omitted. “ The hurry and confu-
 “ sion into which, Mr. Wilton, so unex-
 “ pected and precipitate an action had
 “ thrown

“ thrown me, made me entirely forget to
 “ offer bail. It was suggested by Lady
 “ Bertram. I immediately rode off this
 “ morning, and offered ten thousand pounds
 “ bail, which was positively refused.”
 —“ That was something tyrannical, Sir
 “ Robert,” answered Lady Wilton; “ but
 “ can my son have no better accommoda-
 “ tion than a dreary cell and a truss of
 “ straw ?”—Sir Robert looked amazed,
 “ Has such been your lodging ?”—“ Yes,
 “ and without a murmur.”—“ Heaven
 “ forgive me, how I have neglected my
 “ friend !” The gaoler was called in and
 interrogated, if he could accommodate
 me with a room properly furnished. He
 answered, “ he could, under certain re-
 “ strictions, for an escape might be very
 “ detrimental to him.” Sir Robert offer-
 ed him any indemnification, and the agree-
 ment was instantly concluded.

“ Lady Wilton,” said Sir Robert, “ you
 “ will do me the honour of making Ber-
 “ tram-

“tram-Hall your home during your continuance in the North.”—“Pardon me, Sir Robert, here is my home. I came to attend my son, let not your kindness drag me from him.” I entreated, Sir Robert was importunate, my kind parent was inflexible.—May Heaven shower its choicest blessings on her head!

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER LIII.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR.
WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

YOUR supposition of my having some affair of consequence upon my hands was well founded; but such a wild-goose chase have I been pursuing, as is more than sufficient to cool the ardent flame of the most passionate lover. My plenipotentiary arrived from London with the most agreeable news of having discovered my fair exile, which again revived my hopes, and perched me upon the tip-toe of expectation. The very day before she had determined to quit the metropolis, as she was walking along Pall-Mall, she recollected that a certain old maiden lady,
an

an aunt of Lord Wilton, lived in that street. Having a presentiment that her young lady might be detained there, she determined upon a variety of schemes to gain positive intelligence. Having never been with the family but once at Mrs. Manby's, she concluded the old lady could not recollect her. Having adopted her scheme, she prepared with all diligence to put it in execution. She rapped at the door and enquired for Mrs. Manby. Being informed she was within, Jenny walked forward, saying, she wanted to speak with her. Knowing Mrs. Manby was old and infirm, and not able to leave her room, she was shewn into the apartment where she was sitting. But what was her surprize, when she saw and heard her young lady reading aloud to her aunt. Antonet turned pale—looked much confused—shut the book, and walked to the window. My arch ambassadress, without taking the least notice of her lady, said, “Madam, “as you have advertised for a young wo-

“man

“man to be a companion, and to wait
 “upon you, I have taken the liberty to
 “call, and offer myself to your service.”

Mrs. Manby, peering at her through her spectacles, answered, “Young woman, “you are under a mistake, or misinform-
 “ed; I have advertised none, nor ever
 “did in my life. I have got a compa-
 “nion here, my niece, who I believe
 “will stay with me some time.” Here Antonet, looking about, smiled, unobserved by the old gentlewoman, at Jenny, who, having obtained all the intelligence she desired, wished to decamp. Begging pardon for her mistake, she dropped a curtsy, and made toward the door, when Antonet, under the polite officiousness of shewing her through the passage, stepped before her. Jenny slipped a letter I had given her into her hand, and without a single whisper the room door was shut behind her.

Exulting in her artifice, she came posting to inform me of her success. I set forward

ward the next day towards London, hoping, by a similar stratagem, to obtain possession of what I had lost by violence. As I was travelling at a gentle pace, within a few miles of Barnet I met a post-chaise driving vehemently, which passed without any notice; but in a few seconds one of the footmen who rode behind, came galloping up to my postilion and ordered him to stop. I let down the window, and enquired why he stopped my carriage? when a gentleman looking in at the carriage-door politely asked, if my name was not Benfield? I told him it was. "Then, pray, Sir," replied the gentleman, "where is Miss Antonet Wilton?" I looked astonished at the interrogation, and answered nothing, being much confounded with the question. "Nay, Sir," said another gentleman, "no hesitation; we know she is in your custody." I answered, "Upon my honour, gentlemen, you accuse me without a cause. If she were in my custody, why should I be travelling

“travelling to London, whilst you are
 “travelling to the North in pursuit of
 “her? How long hath she been absent?”
 —“She escaped last night, and being
 “persuaded she had taken refuge with
 “you, we were driving to Benfield-Hall
 “in pursuit of her, when a servant of
 “Lord Wilton’s knew your carriage.”
 —“This may convince you, gentlemen,
 “I am clear of the imputation; there is
 “scarcely a possibility of Miss Wilton’s
 “having reached Benfield-Hall before
 “my departure, which if she had, you
 “may depend upon it you had not met
 “me here.”

This assertion seemed to carry conviction with it; for one of the gentlemen observed, it was certainly altogether unnecessary to pursue farther, since Mr. Benfield, with whom they concluded Miss Wilton had taken up her asylum, was travelling to London. “I deem it a folly,” said the other, “to act otherwise than to
 “return to London with Mr. Benfield,
 “and

“and a little time will bring us information of our stray sheep.”

This proposal I could readily have dispensed with ; but to prevent the busy demon of suspicion, I immediately acquiesced, and desired the gentlemen would do me the honour to accompany me in my carriage. This was frankly accepted, and their post-chaise was dismissed.

Being seated and moving forward, I said smiling, “Pray, gentlemen, will you be so condescending as to inform me by what ingenious artifice Miss Wilton hath been enabled to escape the watchful eyes of her old maiden aunt?”—I had no sooner made the interrogation, than I was conscious of the impropriety of it ; for my discovery that I knew the place of her confinement, might have raised their jealousy ; however, it passed unobserved, and one of the gentlemen answered, “Miss Wilton retired to her chamber about an hour before her aunt. Mrs. Manby, walking up stairs, was
“hastily

“ hastily passed on the first landing by her
 “ footboy—She undrest, and, preparing for
 “ rest, missed her niece, for they slept to-
 “ gether. The alarm was immediately
 “ given, but to no effect—Miss Wilton was
 “ gone. The boy was summoned, and strict-
 “ ly interrogated what he was doing up
 “ stairs at so late an hour. He was con-
 “ founded at the question, and proved by
 “ his fellow-servants he was in bed above an
 “ hour before. Upon examination, it was dis-
 “ covered that the cunning urchin had pro-
 “ cured a suit of the boy’s clothes, in which
 “ equipping herself, she had eluded detec-
 “ tion, and made her escape. Messengers
 “ were immediately dispatched to give us
 “ the intelligence Unfortunately, I was at
 “ the masquerade, and my brother at Drury-
 “ Lane, by which we did not receive the
 “ information until this morning.”

“ Indeed, gentlemen, I differ in opi-
 “ nion ; for I think your absence from
 “ home was very fortunate, and I hope
 “ the

“the fair fugitive, before this time, is
 “far beyond your power. But pray, Sir,
 “did you not meet her at the masque-
 “rade? she was habited for it.”—
 “Now, Mr. Benfield,” replied the
 younger, “you may laugh, because
 “my cousin has duped and disappointed
 “us.”—“Pray, Sir, are you a relation of
 “Miss Wilton?”—“Yes, Sir, I have that
 “honour.”—“Pray, Sir, will you favour
 “me with your name? for I may one
 “day have the pleasure to call you
 “cousin.”—“You are jocular, Mr. Ben-
 “field; my name is Musgrave, the sister’s
 “son of Mrs. Manby.”

Thus we continued in a friendly con-
 versation during the remainder of our
 journey;—I in exulting at the artifice of
 my Antonet—they in laughing at their
 disappointment, and their aunt’s ineffec-
 tual fury.

The carriage stopped at the inn, and,
 after a generous glass, we separated in
 mutual good-will. I tarried no longer than

to

to procure a little refreshment for myself and attendants ; for, engaging post-horses, I came to Benfield-Hall with more expedition than I went from it. I confess I was greatly mortified and disappointed in not finding my sweet fugitive upon my arrival, as I was almost confident she had fled thither.

Distracted and confounded betwixt hope and despair, I am absolutely uncertain how to determine. I wish to stay a day or two lest she should arrive, when my absence might be productive of fresh disappointments. I wish to be with you on many considerations.

Wilton, Wilton, I am lost and bewildered in an ocean of uncertainty ! I shall wait two days with an impatience which you may conceive, but impossible for me to describe. If she come or come not, you may expect me in Morpeth before the expiration of five days.

This is a busy and unfortunate time, Wilton. How it will terminate, is wrapped in the inscrutable womb of futurity, whose mysteries we have no permission to penetrate. The wisdom of the decree is evident; but grumbling mortals are not satisfied with finite knowledge.

I am, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R LIV.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR.
BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

THE day before I received your last, I was agreeably surpris'd by the arrival of a very welcome visitant. Come hither with the utmost dispatch; fly upon the wings of love; for your scape-goat has taken shelter under my protection.

Sitting and entertaining my ever-honour'd parent with a recital of my passion for my charming Olivia, with the proposal of Sir Robert Bertram, and my determin'd resolution to marry her, should I be so fortunate as to meet with an honourable acquittal, Lady Bertram entered, leading in another lady. I arose to receive the ladies, and enquire after the

H 2

health

health of my suffering angel—when the other lady screamed out, “My dear mother!” and flew into her arms. The embrace was mutually tender and affectionate. Disengaging herself from her parent’s arms, my lovely sister flung herself into mine, whilst her tears choked her utterance.—“O, brother, brother!” exclaimed she, “this is a dreadful place for so joyful a meeting!”—“Weep not, my sister, misfortunes often come unsolicited; let us therefore bear them without repining. This meeting, sister, sheds a gleam of joy into my mind, since it convinces me you are free from confinement and the tyranny of restraint. Dry up your tears, and let not your sensibility embitter the first moments of our joy.”—“I will endeavour to obey you, brother; but, my dear Lady Bertram, I must chide you for this surprise: why did you not inform me that my mother was here?”—“I humbly beg your pardon, Miss Wilton; but the hurry you were
“in

“in to leave Bertram-Hall, and the af-
 “fliction which the weakness of my Oli-
 “via has given me, made me guilty of
 “this egregious piece of forgetfulness.”
 —“I was upon the point of enquiring
 “for Olivia, Lady Bertram, when I dis-
 “covered my sister; how is my suffering
 “angel?”—Lady Bertram replied, “The
 “physician gives us assurance, that the
 “fever hath been at its height; the crisis
 “was favourable, and he hopes for a happy
 “recovery.”—“Mother,” said I, “con-
 “gratulate me; this is a happy day.”
 —“Not this alone, my son, but many
 “happy days, I hope, you have to enjoy
 “in your chequered passage through this
 “vale of tears. Now, my child, my
 “Antonet, if the recollection of what
 “you have undergone since you parted
 “from me at Wilton-Park, will not be
 “painful, let me entreat you to favour
 “us with the recital.”

“Whatever pain, my dear mother,
 “I should suffer from the retrospect

“ of some afflicting scenes, my grati-
 “ tude to the best of parents would
 “ induce me to a ready acquiescence with
 “ your wishes. How my father disco-
 “ vered my intention, is altogether to me
 “ incomprehensible. I no sooner heard
 “ my father’s voice than I swooned, and
 “ of what passed afterwards I have not
 “ the least recollection. When I first
 “ came to myself, I was sitting in a car-
 “ riage, in company with my father, who,
 “ hearing my sighs, though he could not
 “ see my tears, began to reproach me bit-
 “ terly for my disobedience, protesting he
 “ would shut me up in a nunnery the first
 “ opportunity he had of procuring me a
 “ safe passage to Italy. I made no re-
 “ ply to all his reproaches, and he be-
 “ came silent, which silence conti-
 “ nued the greatest part of our journey.
 “ When we changed horses, I was not
 “ suffered to leave the carriage; and by
 “ travelling with great expedition through
 “ the night, we arrived in London the
 “ next

“ next morning. The rumbling of the
“ wheels upon the streets awaked me from
“ a dream of torpidity, in which I had
“ dozed for several hours. At length the
“ carriage stopped, and I perceived we
“ were at my aunt Manby’s door. The
“ old lady was not come down stairs; but
“ when informed of our arrival, she came
“ in a few minutes.

“ As soon as she entered, my father
“ said, ‘ My dear aunt, from a thorough
“ conviction of your prudence, I have to
“ commit to your charge a thoughtless run-
“ away, a perverse daughter, whom I de-
“ tected last night in the very act of elope-
“ ment with a man who will bring disgrace
“ upon our family.’—‘ O nephew, nephew,
“ you wring my soul with the relation!
“ What will this world come to! You
“ thoughtless minx, why are you so for-
“ ward to be married? When I was your
“ age, if I saw a man pass by the win-
“ dow, the very sight covered me with
“ blushes, and I hid my face with my

"apron: even now, at the age of eighty-
 "one, I hate the sight of all the ugly
 "creatures, and can scarcely endure my
 "own male relations. Fye, fye, Antonet
 "Wilton!"—I answered with my tears,
 "and kept a fullen silence.

"After many more sarcastic remarks
 "upon the impudent chits of her own sex,
 "my aunt said, 'You judged very right,
 "very right, nephew, in bringing your in-
 "confederate daughter under my care; you
 "may safely trust her to my guardianship,
 "and if she elope from my watchfulness, I
 "give you leave to conclude I was privy
 "to her disobedience.'—My father thanked
 "her, and walked out to transact some
 "business in the city.

"From that moment I became a close
 "prisoner, under the constant inspection
 "of my suspicious old aunt. We sat in a
 "back parlour; we slept, we arose toge-
 "ther. I was absolutely denied the use
 "of pen, ink, and paper, and not permit-
 "ted

“ted to open any other book than the
“Bible or the Practice of Piety.

“Thus passed my days in one conti-
“nued scene of dull uniformity, re-
“proached for my forwardness, reviled
“for my ingratitude, and admonished not
“to contaminate my family by any dis-
“graceful connection.

“I bore all with patience, and never
“once attempted a vindication of my
“conduct, from a firm persuasion it might
“possibly irritate, and certainly would
“not appease her wrath. At last, one
“day when I was sitting reading, what
“was my astonishment when I saw my
“maid Jenny enter the room! I trembled,
“yet I knew not what I had to fear.
“Jenny seemed to take no notice of me;
“but addressing herself to my aunt, who
“did not know her, said, ‘Having seen
“an advertisement in the Papers for a
“woman servant, she was come to offer
“her services, being informed her lady-
“ship was the advertiser.’ She answered,
“She had been misinformed; and whilst

“ Jenny was withdrawing, from a suspicion
“ of some stratagem, I stepped to the
“ room-door, in order to shew her through
“ the passage, when she gave me a letter.
“ I seized the first moment of separation
“ for a perusal, and, after I had perused it,
“ resolved to embrace the first opportu-
“ nity to effect my escape. Under a pre-
“ tence of retiring to my chamber, to
“ which I was conducted by my guar-
“ dian, I folded my riding-dress into two
“ small bundles, and, stealing down stairs,
“ secreted them in the front parlour,
“ which joined the street-door. I then
“ with infinite trouble and precaution
“ procured a suit of livery clothes be-
“ longing to my aunt’s footboy, which I
“ concealed amongst the clothes of our
“ own bed. Then coming down stairs, I
“ carefully examined the lock of the
“ street-door, and again I joined my aunt
“ in the back parlour.

“ Supper being over, I begged leave
“ to retire. It was about ten o’clock at
“ night,

“ night, an hour sooner than our usual
 “ time of bed. I went up stairs, and
 “ with much deliberation dressed myself
 “ in the boy’s livery. Hearing my aunt
 “ upon the stairs, I slipped out of the cham-
 “ ber, and with a palpitating heart walked
 “ down, under a suspicion that she would
 “ not observe me. I met her upon the
 “ landing-place, drew aside, and she passed
 “ me. I stepped into the front parlour,
 “ took up my bundles, and, unlocking the
 “ street-door, recommended myself to the
 “ care of a gracious Providence, and sal-
 “ lied forth into the wide world.

“ I walked with all possible haste
 “ to the inn where the post-coaches set
 “ out for the North, resolving, brother,
 “ to take refuge with you in your little
 “ hermitage. Upon enquiry, I found
 “ none would be ready for some hours.
 “ Being in a private room, I sent for the
 “ mistress of the house, and asked her,
 “ if I could be accommodated imme-
 “ diately with a chaise and four for the
 “ North. The question made her eye me

“ with much attention, and, looking sted-
“ fastly in my face, I felt the conscious
“ blush of shame in an instant overspread
“ it. She stepped to the door and shut
“ it. I was ready to sink with fear and
“ confusion—she perceived it, and bid
“ me not be afraid; adding, ‘ If it be
“ not presumptuous in me, I must observe,
“ that dress suits ill with your person.’
“ Overwhelmed at her prying observa-
“ tion, I threw myself into a chair:—she
“ bid me take comfort—I sighed, and
“ believe I wept. I asked her again, more
“ earnestly than before, if I could have a
“ chaise. She answered, I might; but
“ hoped I would not travel in my present
“ dress. I asked, Why? She replied, Be-
“ cause it would betray my sex. She de-
“ fired I would step to the glass, and ob-
“ serve those signs which led her to detect
“ me. Through the disorder of my mind, I
“ could see nothing to discover my sex.—
“ Why are those pendants there?’—‘ Good-
“ ness, how have I been so blind!’—In
“ the

“ the hurry of my adjustment, I had ac-
 “ tually forgot to take the small gold pen-
 “ dants from my ears which I frequently
 “ wore, and which had betrayed my sex
 “ to my kind hostess. These being re-
 “ moved, I said, By her leave, while the
 “ chaise was getting ready, I would dress
 “ myself in a travelling habit. She with-
 “ drew to give orders, and when she re-
 “ turned, I was properly equipped. She
 “ offered some refreshment—I could not
 “ take any thing, but told her, I hoped
 “ in a short time to recompense her for
 “ her kindness and civility. She smiled,
 “ and asked, if I had not a companion
 “ to the North? I replied, I actually had
 “ not; that I had determined to travel three
 “ hundred miles alone; for I was not at
 “ present flying to the temple of Hymen,
 “ but from the rod of tyranny.

“ The chaise was announced—I entered,
 “ and told the drivers I was travelling to
 “ Carlisle. Thus I came post from stage
 “ to stage without any interruption, and
 without

“without any sleep, except what I got in
“the chaise; and am happy to find my-
“self here, though weary and fatigued.”

Thus, Benfield, I have given you her whole narrative. The prize is now in your own grasp, if you lose it not through indolence or delay. Our affairs, though complicated and involved, seem to be spontaneously unravelling; for what you could not execute with all your diligence and precaution, is fallen unexpectedly into your power. You may be happy; but what destiny awaits me? I will not distress myself, nor cast the gloom of despondency over my present moments, rendered pleasing and agreeable by the company of my dear mother and sister. A vicissitude unlooked for may release me from prison, and restore my mind to its former quiet.

Lady Bertram being very solicitous for Lady Wilton to accompany her to Bertram-Hall to-night, she hath complied, from the desire of consoling her future daughter. May her consolation be restorative!

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LV.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON.
MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

IMMEDIATELY upon the receipt of this letter quit your prison, and, if possible, come to me at Northallerton, and with you bring Sir Robert Bertram. I have caught the arch traitor — Mr. Fennell is in my power, where I mean to keep him until you and Sir Robert arrive to identify his person. He denies himself positively and strenuously to be John Fennell, Esq. of Fennell-Hall in Northumberland; but, from the weakness of his body, his infirm state of health, and the intelligence I received at the inn, I am confident he is the man.

As

As my carriage drove up to the door of the inn at Northallerton, I saw another standing at it, into which a gentleman was mounting by the assistance of his own servant and the landlord. After it had driven away, I enquired who the gentleman was. "It is," replied the landlord, "Mr. Fennell, of Fennell-Hall in Northumberland; he is going to the continent for his health."—"That is the gentleman whom I am travelling to Northumberland to call upon, on very important business; let me have the best horse in your stable immediately."—"O, Sir, I will send after him, if you will favour me with your name."—"No, I must go myself."—The horse was presently ready, and I ordered my servants to follow upon my own. I overtook the carriage a little to the south of the town, and then asking the servant behind to whom it belonged, he looked at me, hesitated, and then answered, it was his master's. "What is your master's name?"—"He is in the carriage,"

“carriage,” replied the fellow. I then rode up to the carriage-door, and, addressing him, said, “If I am not mistaken, Sir, your name is Fennell?”—He answered, “What is that to you? What right do you claim to molest me upon the road?”—“The right that every honest man claims to arrest a villain!—Driver, proceed at your peril.”—The carriage stopped—my servants came up.—He ordered his servants to drive forward against all opposition. I ordered my coachman to turn the horses round, and lead them back to Northallerton. He began to grope in one of the pockets of the carriage. Suspecting his design, I presented a pistol in at the window, charging him to make no resistance, as my servants were all armed. He desisted—the carriage was turned about, and, without the least ceremony, I opened the door, stepped in, and seated myself beside him. He said, “You shall shortly repent of this, Sir.” The only reply I made was, “Pray, Mr. Fennell,

“well, how does Mr. Wilton? Is he yet
 “in Mörpeth gaol?” He started, trem-
 bled, and shrunk from my side, as though
 he had been stung by the deadly asp. He
 would not answer another syllable, until
 I had him a prisoner at the inn, where he
 positively denied having the least know-
 ledge of Mr. Fennell, Mr. Wilton, or
 Sir Robert Bertram. The landlord is as
 positive in identifying his person.

Thus the business remains.—For the
 more expedition, I send this by an especial
 messenger. You will perceive the neces-
 sity of dispatch.

I am, &c.

C O N.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN Mr. Wilton received this letter, Lady Wilton, his sister, and Sir Robert Bertram, were present. He no sooner perused it than he gave it to Sir Robert, desiring him to read it aloud, which he immediately complied with. Lady Wilton no sooner heard the contents, than she dropped upon her knees, and returned her thanks to the Almighty for his providential interposition in the detection of this horrid villainy. Arising, she first kissed her son and then her daughter, and said, "God bless you both, my children! I hope there is a fund of happiness for you in store, the enjoyment of which will amply repay your patience and resignation. Let the gaoler be called." He came, and, being shewed the letter, hesitated how he should act in such

such a contingency. Sir Robert said, "At all events I will indemnify you. If the gentleman at Northallerton be not Mr. Fennell, the prosecutor of Mr. Wilton, I promise, upon my honour, to return Mr. Wilton to-morrow safe into your custody."—"No, Sir Robert," said Lady Wilton, "I will become security for my son; here I will remain until he return."—"O mother," replied Miss Wilton, "let me have the pleasure of standing pledge for my brother. I will stay here, and do you go to Bertram-Hall."—"My affectionate parent, my loving sister," said Mr. Wilton, "you overwhelm me with your goodness"—the tear started in his eye—he turned aside and wiped it away.

In this tender struggle of amiable affection the gaoler said, "He hoped the ladies would pardon him for refusing their offers. He had so firm a reliance upon the honour of Sir Robert, that he would entirely confide in him for an indemnification."

“demnification.” The whole company returned him thanks for his disinterested behaviour, and a chaise being ordered with all speed, the gentlemen took their leave and departed.

The ladies being alone, Miss Wilton said, “My dear mother, you have seen Olivia, my brother’s intended bride; what is your opinion of the lady?”

“Indeed, Antonet, I have had little opportunity to form any conclusive opinion. During my stay at Bertram-Hall, though constantly in her chamber, she was so weak as never to be able to rise, and could only talk at intervals. She was prepared by Lady Bertram for my reception, lest the suddenness of my visit should have occasioned a relapse, which would have been more fatal than the original attack. When I approached her bedside, she held out her hand, took hold of mine, and tenderly kissed it:—the tear rolled down her lily cheek, and she turned her head from me. I

“con-

“ consoled her, and bid her not be afflict-
“ ed. She answered, ‘ O Lady Wilton,
“ can you forgive me for bringing so
“ heavy, so severe a misfortune upon
“ your family ?’—‘ My dear, you were
“ the innocent cause, and need not to
“ solicit my forgiveness.’ — ‘ You are
“ all goodness, my dear Lady ; may
“ you be as happy as your amiability
“ deserves.’ She was very collected, and
“ discoursed seriously and intelligently
“ on the unfortunate exigence which
“ hath distressed us. She seemed to
“ have a due sense of the importance
“ of religion upon her mind, and said,
“ she had seldom ceased to pray for the
“ welfare of my worthy son. There
“ is a perfect symmetry in her features ;
“ her countenance is placid and serene,
“ and from what I can perceive, by the
“ remains of the cruel ravages of aviolent
“ fever, she must have been very beautiful.
“ I have not once attempted to expostu-
“ late

“ late with Henry upon his determination
 “ in this occurrence without the coalescence
 “ of his father ; for, could my Lord be in-
 “ duced to approve the choice of his son, I
 “ should deem her an amiable acquisition to
 “ our family.”

“ O my dear mother,” said Miss Wil-
 ton, “ let us go to Bertram-Hall ; I
 “ long to embrace my sister. Here is
 “ Benfield’s letter, the perusal of which
 “ will restore her to her health.”—“ An-
 “ tonet, I must caution you against any
 “ precipitate discovery ; her tender frame,
 “ at present, cannot bear any violent agi-
 “ tation of grief or joy. Moreover, you
 “ must excuse me for what will probably
 “ seem a little rudeness,—I beg leave to de-
 “ cline seeing Mr. Benfield.”—“ My dear
 “ mother, why so scrupulous ? How hath
 “ Mr. Benfield offended ?”—“ In nothing,
 “ my dear child. You know how I am
 “ circumstanced—rest, both, assured of my
 “ unalterable love. When you, my dear
 “ child, return to Benfield-Hall, nothing
 “ shall

“shall deter me from an early congratulation. As soon as Henry returns, and I am certain of his honourable enlargement, I shall set out for Wilton-Park.”

The ladies returned in Sir Robert's carriage to Bertram-Hall. Olivia was up, for the first time since her confinement. When the ladies were announced, she arose to receive them; but Miss Wilton, running to her, clasped her in her arms, tenderly kissed her, and desired her to be seated. “How is your brother, Miss Wilton?” said Olivia.—“Very well, and very happy, my dear. You know, Olivia, I always suggested that this unhappy contingency would terminate in consonance to our wishes.” —“What news, what fortunate circumstance, my dear lady? Keep me not a moment in suspense—“Be not fluttered—compose yourself.”—“What happy event,” exclaimed Lady Bertram, “hath occurred?”—“Come, Lady Wilton, produce

“duce the letter.” Olivia took the letter, and read it with much composure; then, reaching it to Lady Bertram, she clasped her hands, and casting her eyes up to heaven, poured forth the fervour of her heart in private ejaculations to the God of all Mercy, for his superintending care over the children of innocence. Their feelings on the occasion were tender and delicate, their congratulations mutual and consolatory; and nothing seemed to be wanting to complete their happiness, but the company of the three absent gentlemen.

In the mean time Sir Robert and Mr. Wilton travelled with all imaginable expedition, and upon their arrival at Northallerton immediately drove to the inn, and enquired for Mr. Benfield. They were ushered into the room where he and Mr. Fennell were. Mr. Wilton embraced his friend with a true and affectionate tenderness, and thanked him for his activity and resolution in securing the man who,

by a villainous train of diabolical machinations, had sought to take away his life.

Mr. Fennell, overwhelmed with confusion at this unexpected interview, turned his face from this little circle of friendship, and groaned in the agony of despair. Sir Robert, addressing himself to him, said, "I wish not, Sir, to insult you in
" your misfortunes, but what infernal
" motive could stimulate you to pursue
" the life of Mr. Wilton by so deep-con-
" trived an imposture?"—"You insult
" me, Sir Robert," answered Mr. Fennell, "by your presence; I owe you no
" obedience, and I scorn to answer any of
" your interrogatories."—"Mr. Fennell," said Mr. Wilton, "what injury from me
" could provoke you to such a proce-
" dure? You would have robbed me of
" my peace, destroyed my happiness, and
" bereaved me of a treasure the world
" cannot restore."—"You may triumph
" over me in my present fallen state; but
" I hate, despise, and curse you. Ask
" nothing

“ nothing more ; you know my mind.”
 He gnashed his teeth, and cast a glance
 of horror, first on one, then on the other ;
 and lastly, covering his face with his
 hands, and bowing his body, rested his
 head upon his knees.

Remaining sullen, stubborn and silent,
 and refusing to answer another syllable,
 Mr. Benfield said, “ I hope, Mr. Wilton,
 “ you will adopt the remedy the laws of
 “ your country allow in such a contin-
 “ gence, whereby Mr. Fennell may be
 “ taught what is the penalty for wantonly
 “ sporting with the liberty and life of a
 “ free-born Briton.” Mr. Wilton re-
 plied, “ Benfield, the turpitude of Mr.
 “ Fennell’s actions shall not be my prece-
 “ dent. He has penalty enough to pay,
 “ from the compunction of his own con-
 “ science. The only punishment we can
 “ confer upon a base action is the genero-
 “ sity of our revenge ; pity, but not punish
 “ the actor. Mr. Fennell hath no venge-
 “ ful prosecution to dread from me, ei-
 I 2 “ ther

“ther to curtail the liberty of his person
“or injure his property.—Come, gentle-
“men, let us return.”

“Since I am thus far to the South,” said Sir Robert, “I have some business of
“importance to transact with a gentleman
“who lives a few miles distant. I shall
“beg you to tarry until I write a few
“lines to Lady Bertram, which I hope
“you will deliver to-night or to-morrow
“morning.”

Mr. Wilton having received the letter, he entered Mr. Benfield’s carriage, and set out for Bertram-Hall; whilst Sir Robert at the same time set forward to the South in a post-chaise and four.

The day following, Mr. Wilton and Mr. Benfield arrived at Bertram-Hall. The ladies were in the drawing-room, and Olivia, by the kind assistance of her friends, was enabled to accompany them. As soon as the gentlemen were announced, Lady Wilton withdrew, and immediately Mr. Wilton and his friend entered.

entered. Olivia arose, but was prevented from meeting Mr. Wilton by his eagerness, and her own weakness and trepidation. He embraced her affectionately, and tenderly enquired after the state of her health.

Mr. Benfield and Antonet were enlocked in each other's arms, pouring out the warmest effusions of love and friendship.

"~~Hey~~-dey," said Lady Bertram, "here is such billing, sighing, and embracing! I wish I had my faithful mate Mr. Wilton; where is he?"—"Lady Bertram, I humbly beg your pardon. The joy of seeing my Olivia able to quit her chamber made me forget to deliver you this letter."

"What! Sir Robert gone a hundred miles farther than Northallerton on especial business! Ladies and Gentlemen, you seem to be so perfectly well satisfied with the company of each other, that I shall beg leave of absence; but, pray inform me how you left Mr. Fennell?"—"Indeed, Lady Bertram," said

Mr. Wilton, "though to all appearance
 "very infirm, he was fullen and ill na-
 "tured, and told us he hated, despised and
 "curfed us."—"Heavens, what a devil!"
 exclaimed Lady Bertram; "but what
 "have you done with him?"—"Left
 "him, Madam, to the remorse of his own
 "mind."—"The severest punishment,"
 observed Olivia, "you can inflict upon so
 "worthless a miscreant."

Lady Bertram having withdrawn, Mr.
 Benfield proposed an immediate decamp-
 ment to Scotland with Antonet, as the
 only effectual method to secure their
 happiness and complete their union.
 "Why so precipitate, Benfield? We
 are certainly here out of the reach of
 "pursuit?"—"Why, my Antonet, do
 "you now hesitate? We have now the
 "power which we have long wished for;
 "and remember, a father's authority is
 "superior to a lover's. You have been
 "pursued in your flight; should your
 "pursuers gain intelligence of the place
 "of

“of your refuge, what must be the consequence? A cruel separation, probably, never more to meet.”—“To-day, Mr. Benfield, you have had a long journey; you must be fatigued.”—“Not in the least, my love; consent, and let us go to-day.”—“Mr. Benfield,” said Mr. Wilton, “why do you attempt to persuade my sister to undertake what she is already resolved upon? Has she not travelled, or rather fled near three hundred miles, solely with a view to accomplish what my father lately disappointed her of? Send to Morpeth for post-horses, and if she refuse to accompany your flight to Scotland, may she never be a wife until she number the age of her grandmother.”—“So, so, brother, you are now in a jesting mood; I am happy at the recovery of your vivacity, and assure you I will endeavour to frustrate your wish.”

Mr. Benfield walked out, and immediately dispatched a servant to Morpeth for horses.

In the mean time Lady Bertram entered, and, addressing Miss Wilton, said, "What are you musing upon, and where is your dying swain?" — "She is, Madam," replied Mr. Wilton, "conning over the marriage ceremony, and looking on which finger the ring is to be placed; for you must know, she is to be married before she sleeps." — "What, married to-night, Miss Wilton!" said Lady Bertram, laughing; "you are in a wonderful hurry!" Poor Antonet blushed, and turning to Olivia said, "My dear sister, protect me from the raillery of those good people; I am actually unable to defend myself." Mr. Benfield entered, and Miss Wilton withdrew to Lady Wilton, who was preparing to leave Bertram-Hall the next morning.

Acquainting her mother with the resolution they had taken, she said, whilst the tear trickled down her aged cheeks, "My dear child, may the God of Heaven bless and protect you! You have now
"the

“ the prospect of a happy union with the
“ man you have long fixed your heart
“ upon. Remember the instructions, when a
“ wife, which you learned when a daughter.
“ Let your behaviour to your husband be
“ dutiful, respectful, and amiable ; your
“ attention to him unceasing, and your
“ kindness invariable. Connive at, rather
“ than reprehend, any trifling improprieties,
“ for such will sometimes happen
“ in the married state betwixt the most
“ cautious and prudent. If any little
“ oversight incur a rebuke, let not the
“ petulance of your answer irritate, when
“ your affability ought to appease. Judge
“ with candour of every fault ; for a mutual
“ recrimination is certain to engender contention
“ and strife, which ought to be
“ avoided with the utmost precaution.
“ Let not your home have the least part
“ of your company ; for where a husband
“ is forsaken, a family neglected, for extraneous
“ delights and foreign amusements, coolness ensues, indifference pro-

“duces dislike, and jealousies embitter
“every hour.

“However ample your income, attend
“to your own disbursements: this by the
“giddy will be deemed avaricious, but by
“the wise economical. Mr. Benfield’s for-
“tune is large; whatever splendor or mag-
“nificence you support, let it be with
“dignity. Avoid every species of diffi-
“pation, as productive of immorality;
“and gaming, in a lady, is one of the
“first steps to vice.

“Have no private parties, no pleasures
“but what your husband, if he chuse,
“may participate of; for constant sepa-
“rate amusements may produce suspicion,
“and destroy your quiet.

“Such a conduct must ensure your hap-
“piness, and a mutual return from any
“man of sensibility or discernment. And
“though you may not meet with a reci-
“procation of tenderneffes and good of-
“fices, remember, and let me caution
“you, it is still your indispensable duty
“to

“ to act your part with cheerfulness and
“ good-nature ; for the errors of a hus-
“ band are no precedents to the wife, and
“ retaliation will certainly render you
“ contemptible here and miserable here-
“ after.

“ These and a variety of other precepts
“ of a similar tendency I have constantly
“ inculcated from your earliest years ;
“ let it therefore be your daily study to
“ act in conformity with them, which will
“ endear you to your husband, and make
“ you respected and beloved by all the
“ wise and good in every rank of life.”

“ My dear mother, let me upon my
“ knees return you unfeigned thanks.—
“ This good counsel I shall imprint upon
“ my heart, and all your instructions, I
“ hope, I shall long remember, ever en-
“ deavouring to practise them with that
“ attention which is due to the much re-
“ vered, much beloved author.”

A servant waited and informed Miss
Wilton the chaise was ready. “ Antoner,”

said Lady Wilton, "probably before I
" see you again, you will have acquired
" a nearer relation than that of a mother.
" Let not the love for a husband cause you
" to forget the tenderness of a parent. Be
" as dutiful a wife as you have been
" a daughter, and despair not of being
" happy. The chaise waits—one embrace
" —farewel."

Miss Wilton's heart was overflowing with a gentle sorrow; she could make no reply, but hurried out of the room, and hastily bidding adieu to Lady Bertram, Olivia, and her brother, who handed her into the chaise, she waved one hand to her mother, who stood at the window, and wiped her tears away with the other; the chaise drove off, and they were out of sight in a few minutes.

Mr. Wilton passed the remainder of the day with the ladies, and towards the evening retired to his hermitage to pass the night. Here he was received by the worthy family with every demonstration of a heart-felt joy, who expressed their satisfaction

faction at the defeat of Mr. Fennell's villainy. But no congratulations were more real than those of the grateful Mrs. Moreton, who, being informed of the whole transaction, had waited several hours in anxious expectation of seeing Mr. Wilton, and poured out the effusions of her heart for his life and future safety.

He received these testimonies of friendship with kindness and gratitude; not despising the benevolence of poverty, nor the good-wishes of those in an humble station; convinced they are often more real than the unmeaning compliments and customary promises amongst the higher ranks of life.

In the morning he walked to Bertram-Hall, where he found his venerable parent prepared for her departure, and only waiting to bid him adieu. He offered to accompany her part of her journey, which she objected to, saying, "No, Henry, your presence may be of service towards restoring the health of
" your

“ your future bride ; it can be of none to
“ me, except prolonging the pang of sepa-
“ ration. Remember, Henry, it is your
“ duty to solicit, the first opportunity,
“ your father’s blessing and forgiveness.
“ If he continue implacable, let not his
“ implacability be an example for your
“ ingratitude. He is your father, and
“ though, from a just provocation, he may
“ have swerved from the path of christian
“ patience, yet you owe him every duty that
“ a son can owe to a parent. He has done
“ more for you, by rearing and protect-
“ ing your infancy, by diligently leading
“ you up to maturity, by instilling into
“ your tender mind the principles of vir-
“ tue and religion, and by bestowing up-
“ on you a liberal education, than all
“ your obedience and attention can ever
“ recompense.

“ You are now going to take a partner
“ for life. She is worthy of your choice,
“ and would add dignity to any family.
“ Sir Robert’s bounty is magnificent in-
“ deed ;

“ deed ; equal, if not superior, to your fa-
“ ther’s expectations from Sir George Sil-
“ vertop. From my knowledge of life, from
“ the well-known acquisitions of your mind,
“ I can have little to add, relative to the
“ duties of a husband. Let your first
“ care and attention be paid to the partner
“ of your soul. Assiduity will encourage
“ and keep alive the lambent flame of
“ love ; but indifference will undoubtedly
“ extinguish it. Impart every wish ; let
“ her share your joys and participate of
“ your sorrows ; for, believe me, no one
“ is so proper for the tender charge,
“ as the wife of your bosom. She will
“ alleviate, assuage, and console you,
“ whilst the sneers of a jovial companion,
“ or the scoffs of a sunshine friend, would
“ only add to the bitterness of your
“ woe.”

Lady Bertram and Olivia entered, to
with their venerable guest a prosperous
journey.—She continued, “ Lady Ber-
“ tram, your civilities have made a deep
“ im-

“impression in my breast, which will
 “not be soon or easily obliterated; for
 “which, I hope, you will accept my most
 “grateful acknowledgements, until your
 “kindness afford me a proper opportunity
 “of making a suitable return. Olivia,
 “the next time I see you, I hope to
 “be united to you by a nearer tie than
 “that of friendship. May your days be
 “crowned with happiness, your head
 “with age, and Henry enjoy your unva-
 “rying love to the last moment of your
 “existence!”

She then tenderly embraced Olivia,
 kissed her, and recommended her to the
 gracious protection of Providence. Oli-
 via could only answer her tenderness by
 bedewing her aged cheek with the tears
 of sensibility. She then embraced her
 son, bidding him, next to his Creator,
 reverence his father; it was a duty no
 earthly consideration could dispense with.
 “Let this embrace, Lady Bertram, ce-
 “ment

“ment a friendship only to be dissolved
“when our time has run its course.”

The carriage being ready, Lady Wilton left her companions suffused in the gentle feelings of a tender sorrow, unable to return her benevolence, or utter a last farewell. She was conducted to the carriage by her grateful son, who visibly felt a pang of separation from his amiable parent, which he in vain attempted to conceal.

When he returned to the ladies, the eyes of Olivia were still glistening with the drops of tenderness; but Lady Bertram had recovered her wonted serenity, and she accosted Mr. Wilton by saying,
“Had not the forehead of Lady Wilton
“been wrinkled by the venerable hand of
“Time, I should have concluded her to
“be an angel sent from above to spread
“benignity and love amongst the thought-
“less children of this world. Olivia,
“what blessings await you from an affi-
“nity with so much goodness!”—“Lady
“Bertram,

“Bertram, what your goodness and friendship have instilled, will be matured by the experience and wisdom of Lady Wilton, but never, never can be forgotten.”

Mr. Wilton passed most of his time at Bertram-Hall in the company of Olivia, whose health received additional vigour by his attendance and assiduity. On the third day from their departure, Mr. Benfield and his bride returned from their visit to the shrine of Hymen on the banks of the Tweed. Pleased with the certainty of Olivia's increasing health, they made only a momentary call, and set out immediately for Benfield-Hall.

A few days after Sir Robert arrived late in the evening, and the morning following Mr. Wilton paid his usual visit. It was near eleven in the morning, and upon his arrival Olivia was walking in the garden. He joined her, and was informed that Sir Robert was come home. They retired to the arbour of woodbine,
and

and were pleasing themselves with the recital of past sorrows, and enjoying their future happiness by anticipation, when a servant came and informed them Sir Robert waited for their company. They arose with alacrity to pay their respects to their common benefactor. They walked into the room hand in hand, and without observing particularly another gentleman present, ran to congratulate Sir Robert on his return. Mr. Wilton, turning to address the stranger, exclaimed with wonder, "Sir George Silvertop!" while he stood fixed in amazement, and overwhelmed with confusion. The exclamation caused Olivia to fix her eyes upon the gentleman—she grew pale in an instant—trembled—and faintly screaming, "Heavens, my father!" fell lifeless into the arms of Mr. Wilton. "I was afraid of this," "Lady Bertram," said Sir Robert; "but you wished to try if she knew Sir George after so long an absence."—"Pardon me, Sir Robert; forgive me," "Sir

“ Sir George ; I apprehended no dan-
 “ ger.—Thou suffering angel, look upon
 “ me, and forgive me.—She opens her
 “ eyes—God be praised !” Recovering
 her strength, she dropped upon her knees
 before Sir George, saying, “ Will an ho-
 “ noured, injured parent forgive an un-
 “ dutiful daughter?”—“ My child, you
 “ shall not kneel alone”—kneeling and
 tenderly embracing his daughter—“ I
 “ ought to ask forgiveness.—Heaven is all
 “ gracious, and its dispensations are un-
 “ searchable ! May this be the happy
 “ prelude to years of future peace ! Rise,
 “ my child ; your early afflictions shall be
 “ recompensed, your sufferings rewarded.
 “ You, Mr. Wilton, are not the least
 “ instrumental in this restoration of a
 “ daughter to the arms of a dejected pa-
 “ rent, by your rejection of my younger
 “ daughter ; for which you are amply en-
 “ titled, not only to my warmest thanks,
 “ but even to the kindest effects of my
 “ beneficence ; I therefore beg leave to
 “ add

“ add to the bounty of Sir Robert, thirty
 “ thousand pounds, as a tribute due to
 “ the merit of a child I have long been
 “ unacquainted with.”—“ Your munifi-
 “ cence, gentlemen,” said Mr. Wilton,
 “ far surpasses my most sanguine expecta-
 “ tion. It shall be my future study not
 “ to be undeserving of it.”

The day of marriage being appointed, the intervening time was spent in the necessary preparations. When the morning arrived which was to unite this happy couple, already united by a reciprocal affection, Olivia, when approaching the holy altar, was surprized by the address of a stranger, who, delivering a letter to her, immediately retired. She put it in her pocket, and the ceremony was immediately performed. Upon the return of the company to Bertram-Hall, she opened the letter and perused it. She was visibly affected, and the letter dropped from her hand. She begged to retire, and Lady Bertram handed her out of the room.

room. Mr. Wilton took the letter up, and read the contents to the company.

TO MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM.

MADAM,

THE day that unites you to my hated rival unites me to my grave. I have long, from your hate, led a life of misery; it draws now to a termination. My emissary acquaints me, you are to be married on Thursday at ten o'clock. Think, when before the altar, and repeating the holy ceremony, that you hear the dreadful explosion which rends my soul from my body, and sends it cursing into an unknown eternity,

J. FENNELL.

"Heaven,"

“Heaven,” exclaimed Sir George, “in thy infinite mercy, pity his wretched soul!”—“His doom is fixed,” said Sir Robert, “before this; I know his determined resolution. Let us go and endeavour to alleviate the anxiety into which the perusal of this dreadful billet hath thrown your amiable bride. His malice operates beyond the grave—this, I hope, is its last effort. May his soul find more peace than he wishes to leave behind him!”

On entering the room, they found Olivia upon her knees, pouring forth her pious ejaculations to her Maker, to have mercy on this unthinking, mistaken man. When she arose, Mr. Wilton embraced her, and bid her not afflict herself with the consideration of Mr. Fennell’s unhappy fate, for his Creator was all-gracious, and might finally shew him mercy.

They all endeavoured to console her, and dissipate the melancholy which overspread her mind. Their assiduities were partly

partly effectual, and, in order to restore her wonted serenity, Sir George proposed a journey to his seat in Hertfordshire; which proposal recalled to the recollection of Mr. Wilton his mother's injunction, of soliciting, the first opportunity, his father's forgiveness; he therefore seconded Sir George, when Olivia, Lady and Sir Robert Bertram readily acquiesced.

On the third day after the marriage they left Bertram-Hall, and arrived safe, after an agreeable journey, at Sir George's seat. The day following Sir George set out for Wilton-Park, and returned before dinner, in company with Lord and Lady Wilton. Mr. Wilton and Olivia were informed of their arrival, who desired to be introduced, and humbly to solicit a blessing and forgiveness. Mr. Wilton and Olivia entered the drawing-room hand in hand, preceded by Sir George and Sir Robert Bertram. They walked forward and fell upon their knees before Lord and Lady Wilton.—Lord Wilton's countenance

nance changed—the glance of rage darted from his eyes, and he arose abruptly, saying, “I thought, Sir George, you would not have had the audacity to affront me thus deliberately. You have duped me by a lie, inveigled me to your house, and insulted me with a spurious daughter.”—“My Lord,” answered Sir George, “be patient; I am clear of any such accusation. This lady, who is kneeling at your feet, is actually my daughter by a prior wife. She lost her mother when she was six years of age. I married the present Lady Silvertop when she was eight. From some unhappy misunderstanding betwixt Lady Silvertop and the child, without any previous notice the latter left my house at ten years old, and took refuge with Sir Robert Bertram, the intimate and confidential friend of her mother. With a truly paternal care Sir Robert and Lady Bertram have adopted and educated my

VOL. III. K “child.

“child. You may remember, my Lord,
“hearing me frequently lament this mis-
“fortune as an affliction which had embittered
“my days, and poisoned my earthly
“cup with wretchedness and woe. Sir
“Robert, Lady Bertram, and Lady Sil-
“vertop, personally can avouch for
“the truth of my asseveration.”—“Sir
“George,” replied Lord Wilton, I shall
“not dispute your veracity, nor call upon
“the ladies and gentlemen to the irksome
“task of avouching your integrity. Your
“character for uprightness and probity is
“too well established to be questioned in
“this contingency; and since my son
“hath married your daughter, if Miss
“Silvertop will forgive the insult, I will
“pardon his disobedience. I vowed to
“reject him eternally, unless he married
“your daughter; that vow is now anni-
“hilated by his performance.”—“My
“Lord,” said Lady Wilton, “take com-
“passion on your sweet daughter, who is
“kneeling

“kneeling all this time at your feet.”—

“Pardon my inattention, daughter;” then laying his hands upon their heads, he added,

“Take my forgiveness, my children. May

“happiness be your portion in this life;

“and in the next, eternal felicity!”

They arose, and he kindly embraced them both, saying, “You must apolo-

“gize for your insult to Miss Silvertop.”

—“That my father has already done,

“and her forgiveness obtained.”

“There is nothing now remains, my

“Lord,” said Lady Bertram, “to make

“the whole circle of your friends com-

“pletely happy, than your pardon to ano-

“ther child.”—“Ha! what of her, my La-

“dy?—Do you know where she hath taken

“refuge?”—“Where, my Lord, should

“she, but at Benfield-Hall, in the arms

“of its owner! Nay, no frown, my Lord;

“be not chagrined: I will never cease

“soliciting your forgiveness for your ami-

“able daughter until I obtain it.”—“You

"are, Lady Bertram," replied Lord Wilton, "an importunate suitor. My objections to Mr. Benfield were neither to his family nor fortune; but he was always haranguing against the authority of parents, and contradicting my opinions on most of my favourite topics."—The door opened, and Lady Wilton entered, leading her daughter Benfield by the hand, who kneeled and asked her father's forgiveness: Mr. Benfield followed her example.—"No hesitation," said Lady Bertram, "or I shall kneel too, my Lord; and what a ludicrous spectacle would it be, to see two ladies kneeling to one gentleman!"—"Tho' advanced in years, my Lady, I yet have too much gallantry to permit you to sue in vain. Rise, my children, and be as happy as your love and perseverance deserve." "This reconciliation, my Lord," said Mr. Benfield, "completes my wishes; yet, will you be so obliging as to acquaint

“quaint me, how you obtained the intelligence of our intended elopement?” Lord Wilton, pulling out a pocket-book, answered, “That letter, which I found, when I was courting in the vicinity of Benfield-Hall, the day before your appointment, will explain the mystery.” —“It is your letter, my Antonet, containing the hour of assignation, which I unfortunately lost.”

Sir George Silvertop, overjoyed at the restoration and honourable alliance of his daughter, invited the whole company to pass a few days with him, which were spent with all the harmony of good nature, and the confidence of friendship.

Mr. Wilton and his lovely bride, at the earnest solicitation of Sir Robert and Lady Bertram, consented to spend the first year of their marriage at Bertram Hall.

Mr. Longford was no sooner informed of their marriage, than he sunk into a deep melancholy, by which he was totally

tally lost to his friends and to society; whilst Mrs. Moreton was unanimously chosen to be housekeeper at Bertram-Hall, during the continuance of Mr. Wilton and Olivia there; and when they removed, she was to remove with them, and act in the same capacity.



THE END.

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